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POT SHOTS FROM PEGASUS

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POT SHOTS FROM PEGASUS

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POT SHOTS FROM PEGASUS

BY KEITH PRESTON

with
an introduction

BY CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

33553

New York
COVICI FRIEDE PUBLISHERS
1929

YORK COLLEGE

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3531
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CHRISTOPHER MORLEY ON KEITH PRESTON

KEITH PRESTON will be sadly missed; his untimely death, in his forty-third year, was a grief to us all. It was an excellent day for literary journalism when he gave up a Latin professorship at Northwestern University to become columnist and soothsayer on the Chicago *Daily News*. He entered with charming grace into the apostolic succession of witty versifiers, whose stanzas have scoured that city not less keenly than her winds from off the Lake.

Preston was a real wit, and he brought to his diurnal oracles the clear focus and perspective of a trained scholar. His Ph.D., one remembers, was awarded for special studies in "The Diction of the Sermo Amatorius of the Latin Comedy," and there was always the specially Latin flavour in his own verses, a sort of phosphate of lime and Plautus, an acetylene sparkle. His mind was suckled at the dugs of the Roman wolf, he was Uncle Romulus rather than Uncle Remus. Sometimes we used to think that he was almost too insistent to give his commentaries a night-club flavor, to loop the loop too conscientiously. But, having put his cakes in the oven of journalism, it was part of his quiet merriment to do them brown and crisp.

Many have been reproached as punsters who were never so peccant as he—for instance one of his Chinese seizures:

"LAPSUS LINGUAE

We wanted Li Wing
  But we winged Willie Wong.
A sad but excusable
  Slip of the tong."

He was parodist, punster, satirist, and wit. Who that happened upon the following in the hurly-burly of pre-Christmas shopping and advertising will miss the real feeling behind the touch of savagery:

"THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Peter was a fisher boy
  Helping with the haul;
Pilate was a shavetail
  Leading troops in Gaul.
Judas was as innocent
  As little child can be;
The wood that made the crucifix
  Was still a growing tree;
Unminted still the silver
  That made the traitor's pay,
And none had yet commercialized
  The spirit of the day."

Like so many satirist brethren, he was himself of a gracious, shy gentleness and gravity; and liable, moreover, to those mischances of the impossibly absurd which specially afflict philosophers. I remember him arriving late at a large lunch-table in the Blackstone Hotel, one of those generous luncheons spread by Marcella Burns-Hahner, the famous bookseller. The others were all seated and already at pasture; Keith, very late, approached bashfully through the crowded room and made a polite circuit of the board to greet his hostess and other guests. Suddenly he disappeared backward into a dense tropic of ferns and jungle which was arranged in a degraded recess at the corner of the room. I shall not forget with what anxious courtesy he eventually re-emerged, climbing out from among the foliage, and remarking that he had often heard that Blackstone was full of difficult passages.

When there was a certain ill-starred meeting of the

Modern Language Association, at which he was to speak, who was more pained than he to observe the occasion tottering toward the brink of contentious farce? One remembers with affection the meetings with him—too few—at the Cliff-Dwellers Club, or in an office in the People's Gas Building, where his shy humor spread wings, where speculation dropped its landing gear, and none of us cared when or whether we came back to earth. He enjoyed representing himself as the saturnian temperament:

"I like to prod the piffle
With which the press is full,
Or, like the banderillo,
Pin ribbons on the bull——"

but how prettily the ribbons were impricked:

"We cannot bear to roast a book
Nor brutally attack it;
We lay it gently on our lap
And dust its little jacket."

Speaking with the privilege of one whose own jacket has occasionally—and how charmingly—been so depulverized, I write these lame paragraphs with a heavy sense of affection and loss.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF KEITH PRESTON WRITTEN IN 1922

I WAS born September 29, 1884, in Chicago, within easy walking distance of the Union Stockyards. My formal education was in local schools, beginning with Appleton's first reader and ending with an oral examination for the Doctorate in Classics at the University of Chicago. From this experience I retain a deep admiration for the Greek and Latin masters, and, in English literature, a taste for eighteenth century prose and the poetry of Milton and Marlowe.

Outside academic walls, I came under various influences, some of which I now recognize as of lasting importance. A book that influenced my child mind was "Forging His Chains," by George Bidwell, the Bank of England robber. As a youth I attended the Methodist Church, and sat under the preaching of Dr. Frank Crane, whose homilies made an indelible impression, which nothing that either of us has been able to do since could entirely eradicate. While teaching at the University of Indiana, I met some of the best people on earth at the local Elks' lodge, and got my grounding in the works of the Indiana literary school. A year's teaching experience at Princeton under Dean Andrew West taught me the intellectual importance of luxurious surroundings. The genial influences of the Princeton and Nassau Inn bars deserve passing mention. From the lush pasturage of Princeton I passed to the Northwestern University at Evanston, where such lax tendencies as the

Indiana Elk and the *Princeton Tiger* had encouraged were gradually corrected.

My entry into journalism was not premeditated. I began writing as one of the moths that fluttered round the brilliant light that Bert Leston Taylor kept burning in the "Line o' Type" column in the Chicago *Tribune*. Under his discerning eyes, I learned to distinguish *vers libre* from poetry, good puns from bad, and how to detect plain and fancy piffle. The next step was transplanting to a corner of the Wednesday Book Page of the Chicago *Daily News*, where I was encouraged to set up shop as a critic of modern literature, a full-fledged critic who had read nothing much since Alexander Pope! To my surprise and delight I discovered matter for laughter, matter for tears, and even stuff for serious admirations in the work of living writers. Mingling the methods of the laughing and weeping philosophers with an occasional whole-souled blurb in the best modern style, I have battened for four years on the creative writers of the day. Lately, I have been presented with a daily column in which to vent such puns and doggerel as cannot plausibly be strung upon literary leaders.

The result is a professor turned columnist, rueful at times over the lost teaching which he found good fun, but enjoying the give-and-take of journalism. Like any old dog that has learned new tricks, he envies the technique of columnists bred from cubs to the chase. He continues a humble student of the art of columning. As a critic, of course, it is a different story, for here the professorial ego flourishes unchecked over defenseless poets, novelists, and publishers.

In the spring of 1926, Keith Preston became editor of the *Daily News* Wednesday book page, retaining his daily column, "Hit or Miss," and his Wednesday column, "The Periscope," until his death on July 7, 1927.

BOOKS BY KEITH PRESTON.

THE TYPES OF PAN
SPLINTERS
TOP O' THE COLUMN
COLUMN POETS (EDITED)
POT-SHOTS FROM PEGASUS

Acknowledgments for permission to reprint verses and prose are due to The Chicago *Daily News*, The Chicago *Tribune*, Moffat, Yard and Co., and to *The Bookman*.

PART I: VERSE

POT SHOTS FROM PEGASUS

PART 1

CONFESSION

Our Pegasus, you know of course,
Is just a kind of stalking horse,
Behind which we take pot shots at
Game that would else elude our gat.

Verse, as a vehicle for satire,
Makes prose a flivver with a flat tire.
You shoot and run quite undetected
And sometimes even unsuspected.

Let other critics kill with curses,
We sneak around with sawed-off verses,
And when with bard-shot we have filled 'em,
Our victims never know what killed 'em.

LINES WRITTEN WHILE OPENING OUR COLUMN MAIL

The oyster man opens full many
  An oyster to find a few pearls,
And some days he doesn't find any;
  It's then that he angrily hurls
His oyster knife at his assistant
  And utters a horrible yell,
As he curses the shortage persistent
  That's shooting his trade all to shell.

The columnist sits in his cloister
And, cleverly doing his stint,
Slits open each pearl like an oyster
And peers for a pearl fit to print.
He beams when a bivalve yields verses,
He giggles with glee at a wheeze,
But some days he bursts into curses
And scribbles some verses like these.

THE UNKNOWN BANKER

Skyscrapers soar into our ken,
Of steel and stone a wondrous tissue;
Do poets ever sing the men
Who float the underlying issue?
Yon webs of stone and steelwork stanch
Are founded on commercial paper
That men of vision have to launch,
Ere spire and tower can soar and taper.
The banker and the broker seem
Like spiders in their hidden holes;
And yet they weave the shining dream
That stimulates poetic souls.
For ere the architect can plan
Or calculate his stress and strain,
He seeks some big La Salle street man,
Of eagle eye and massive brain,
And, ere the poet sees on high
Slim spire and shining buttress rise,

The thrifty public has to buy
  First liens on mansions in the skies.
The poets toil not, neither spin,
  Nor pay for one skyscraping story,
But when the final rivet's in,
  They brag like Solomon in his glory.
To us, a radical and reb,
  In poet circles an outsider,
It seems a shame to sing the web
  And give no credit to the spider.
We sing the men who raise the jack
  That builds the scraper of the sky,
Whom poets with their facile knack
  Do so ignore and stultify.

BANKER OR JOURNALIST?

Put the boy in a bank or a paper?
  There is a problem for dads.
Shall he add up columns of figures,
  Or figure up columns of ads?

SUGGESTION FOR THE MODERN HAMLET

Let some one show upon the stage
Youth's generosity to age,
Boys, with the modesty of youth,
Bearing with age's carping tooth.
The old grad boasting what he did
Upon some prehistoric grid,

"Pepping" the team with sanctimonious
Platitudes like a new Polonius,
And young Laertes sitting mum,
Respectful to the poor old bum,
As if he did not know this dross
For senile brag and applesauce.

THE CONVENTIONAL SILVER LINING

Old Dean Inge is a glum old thing,
And a glum old thing is he;
But he makes black pessimism bring
High class publicity.

From every cloud the Dean extracts
His silver lineage surely,
And if you want the honest facts,
It pays him to see poorly.

THE FATHER OF BIOGRAPHY

Had Plutarch seen his infant art
As it has grown to be,
I doubt if he'd have had the heart
To start biography.
For it has grown so bright and smart
And big and bold and bad,
It doesn't give a whoop in Hellas
For old fools like its dad.

THE SANTA CLAUS NOBODY KNEW

With acknowledgments to Bruce Barton

The Santa that we knew
Was too simple to be true;
He had no modern sense of merchandising.
Santa's now a bright young man,
Full of pep and push and plan
And thoroughly alive to advertising.

The whiskers that he wore
He clings to as of yore,
For there's nothing like a long established label;
But beneath the beard that smothers,
Like the venerable Smith brothers,
Our Santa is dynamic, young, and able.

His gifts, we grant, are better,
Since our Santa turned go-getter,
And his truck's more expeditious than a sleigh;
But we liked the bluff old fellow,
Full of bluster, full of bellow,
That used to blunder in on Christmas day.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

Whether on turkey or on goose,
On pumpkin or on mince,
Cider or sacramental juice,
May you fare like a prince!

Amid your plenty, pity foes
Or friends abroad who starve.
And save a tender spot for those
At home who have to carve!

THE FIRST NEW YEAR'S

In Eden Eve and Adam viewed
The fig tree of their fief,
And Adam promised that he would
Turn over a new leaf.

INCOME TAX DAY

Greeting the great and the small,
Asking each man what he earns,
Uncle Sam wishes you all
Many happy returns!
Squeezing your hand in a way
No one doubts is sincere,
Many returns of the day,
Uncle Sam says, the old dear!

TO LADY LUCK

"Aged Pinochle Player Dealt 1,000 Aces;
Dies of Heart Failure."—*Headline.*

How often have I knelt to thee
And prayed there might be dealt to me
A perfect hand—you flout my trust
And deal me one more perfect bust.

Yet well I know, false flirt, some day,
When I am old and weak and gray,
You will be kind in cruel sport
And grant the suit that now I court;
I'll hold the hand I covet just
Before I am a perfect bust.

AN ACQUIRED TASTE

"Brancusi, in such productions as 'The Kiss,' has lately turned toward Cubism."—The Chicago *Evening Post Art Supplement.*

We don't know much of modern art,
But we're convinced of this:
That we're too old to school our heart
To kiss a cubist miss.

Though fond enough of Cupid's chase,
It takes a warmer biped
Than we to fondle or embrace
A parallelepiped.

We'd like to put on modern airs,
To learn artistic "isms,"
And figure in the love affairs
Of highbrow prunes and prisms

But—maybe we're a common boor,
Maybe it's growing age—
The geometrical amour
Our heart cannot engage.

The taste for a Brancusi miss
  May be acquired—but how?
At present we're convinced of this:
  We'd rather kiss a cow.

PARABLE

Re: "Elmer Gantry"

A redheaded woodpecker tries to tackle
The tin roof of the tabernacle.
The din is great but the damage small;
That's "Red" Lewis, after all.

DEDUCING THE DOWAGER

"I can tell you what you are from a single handshake," *"character builder" tells Chicago club women.*

Given a toe-bone, nothing more,
  From prehistoric feet,
Science sets up a dinosaur,
  Colossal and complete.

So the adept of character,
  Given one flabby flipper,
Can build the whole dumb dowager
  From topknot down to slipper.

ADD AESOP'S FABLES

Old Aesop tells the sorry fate—
  Pathetic, though we laugh—
Of Mrs. Frog, who would inflate
  Herself to match the calf.

But song nor story has not staled
  The tragedy we sing,
The Stylish Stout that starved, yet failed
  To be a Sylph, poor thing!

LINES TO A PORTRAIT OF ANDREW GUMP

Was this the face that launched a thousand strips
And built the topless tower of Joe Medill!

MADAME BUTTERFLY: MOVIE VERSION

"Jap Girl Shoots Italian: Blame Yankee Movies."—*Headline.*

Light is breaking in on Asia—
  Thank Yank stars from Hollywood.
Getting gay with a poor geisha
  Isn't going to be so good.

THE TOP OF THE COLUMN

HORACE, ODES 3:30

Exegi monumentum aere perennius

More lasting than granite or marble or brass,
The trophy my verses have builded,
A book that shall live when the pyramids pass,
Where monarchs lie mummied and gilded.
Come rain like a flail, come lightning, come hail,
Come boisterous Boreas raving!
Time, tide, death, and taxes in vain shall assail
What part of this poet is worth saving.
My fame shall still grow while Rome's high altars glow,
And vestals rekindle her fire;
From Tiber to Tyre every nation shall know
The new note I hit on the lyre.
Be dressy, my muse, never was such excuse,
In honor of me go the limit!
Bedeck with proud laurel your locks long and loose—
There's nothing will wither or dim it.

NO ACCOUNTING FOR TASTES

"Sift Love Nest."—*Headline*

On birds'-nest soup, that dubious mess,
The Chinaman will dine;
At love-nests warmed up in the press
This heathen draws the line.
His pap sheer poison seems to us,
So finicky in feeding;

Contrariwise, he won't discuss
What we call racy reading.
Relishing rodents in his pot,
This funny chap, 'tis said,
Is most absurdly careful what
He takes into his head.

FOXY GRANDPA

Says grandpa, peering through his specs
At modern prose and rhyme:
"The youngsters have discovered sex—
I knew it all the time!"

SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY

Omar Khayyam was not a drinking man, Dr. Jinab-I-Fadil tells the Bahai assembly in San Francisco.

When Omar sang beneath the bough
His Rubaiyat divine,
He had, so Persian pundits vow,
No woman there, nor wine.

His jug was just a metaphor,
And, as for that suspicious she,
His lyric "thou," scholastic lore
Declares a harmless simile.

A metaphor, a simile,
Those sins that sots were wont to boast;
Omar's suspected jeu de spree
Was done on tea and toast.

Mixed metaphors his only brew,
Verbal his inebriety,
He shocked grammarians, 'tis true,
But lived with prim propriety.

Bone-dry beneath his rooftree bough,
And wedded to domestic pleasures,
With typist, teacup, and tin cow
He sang his syncopated measures.

Omar at last is free from stain,
Dry bones have put a bone-dry face on
His work and made it safe and sane
As Edgar Guest or old Walt Mason.

PERFECT COMPANIONSHIP

"Have a bed book that waits with you before you sleep. To love a good book works as profound a change in a man as to love a good woman."—Dr. Frank Crane in the Chicago *Daily News*.

It cleaves to you like kith and kin,
A bed book chosen right,
And doesn't ask you where you've been,
When you come home at night.

No sympathy so full and deep,
As bed book gives to man.
It talks to you when you can't sleep
And shuts up when you can.

TWO LADIES

Anita Loos and Willa Cather
Are different, we grant you, rather.
But when it comes to ladies shady,
There's "The Lost Lady" and the Loos lady.

RESPONSIBLE WILLIAM

See the Chicago Society for Child Study and Parental Education.

"Yes, sir!" says Willy, "I was wild!
But it does sober up a child
To have to show his parents how
A fellow should be brought up now.

"I have to show ma how to win me
And help the old man discipline me;
I tell you it is no child's play
To train the parents of to-day."

A DISTURBING ELEMENT

"Sex is like electricity," says the Reverend Dr. Preston Pothamus of Ossian, Ind. "There is real danger in elec-

tricity, not in having it in our homes, but in what might happen from it."

Here is a problem, plain, clear cut,
The wisest to perplex;
Sex is a household menace, but
What's home without some sex?

We have it in the house, of course,
And yet there's danger in it;
With sex around 'most anything
May happen any minute.

THE LIGHT THAT LIES IN WOMAN'S EYES

It's sometimes very hard to know
Whether that light says "Stop!" or "Go!"
And many a lover has been lost,
Because he got his signals crossed.

PREPAREDNESS

For Men Only

In time of peace prepare for war;
In time of matrimony
Set by some little secret store
Exempt from alimony

WOMEN

Once set apart as kittle cattle,
Given to tea and tittle-tattle,
Behold 'em in life's hustle-bustle
Now up to man in mind and muscle.

They ballot with the raggle-taggle;
In business life they higgle-haggle;
They strap-hang with the manly tugger;
In motors they ride hugger-mugger.

On football fields they boola-boola;
On dancing floors they hula-hula;
In every walk of life they double
Our stress and strain and toil and trouble.

GOOD REASONS

Two things make woman slow, we find,
  In going any place;
For first she must make up her mind
  And then her face.

BALLAD OF BARLEY

"Do you know that Barley was the Food of the World down to the Sixteenth Century?"—American Barley Sales Corporation.

'Twas barley gave the dander that drove Alexander on;
And barley built the burly boys who crossed the Rubicon,
And barley braced King Charlie, whom some call Charlemagne,
To do big things in Burgundy, and Germany, and Spain.

Chorus.

A thing of beauty and of joy,
Yea, every grain a pearl!
'Tis barley makes the burly boy
And eke the buxom girl.

'Twas barley kept King Alfred well (he toasted it in cakes);
He could not have done what he did had he had bellyaches.
And "barley-fed" the barons who bullied bold King John,
When he was weak and bilious from the sweets he feasted on.

Chorus.

Not beef alone made England great;
If Britain bows to sloth,
'Tis that her sons neglect of late
The British barley broth!

PLAYER-MANAGER

When I was a lad in the light-wit class,
And colyuming only play,
I could hit and run
With a rime or poem
A couple o' times a day.

But now I fit in the welter-wits
Not far from obesity;
I find it no wrench
To warm the bench,
While the contribs bat for me.

I can bear to sit coaching younger wit
With an "Attaboy!" or "Rotten!"
If the contribs crack,
I can still come back
And show 'em some old-time swattin'!

THE CHAIN POEM

We wrote a doggerel one day
Just to provoke a titter;
It met a chap called "F.P.A."
And came home with a litter.
For "F.P.A." took hold of it
And tacked a tinkling verse on;
Jake Falstaff, then, with cruel wit,
Tied on a somewhat worse 'un.
Tom Deming saw what Jake had done
And, like a column brother,
Helped Jake in keeping up the fun
By hitching on another.
A rolling stone, some people think,
Will never gather mossage,
But rolling pomes grow link by link
Like to bologna sausage.

It wasn't very good at first,
The honest truth to tell,
But now it's gone from bad to wurst,
Our little doggerel!

MYSTERIOUS DISPENSATIONS

Lame Byron's verses never limp,
Blind Milton's mind was never dim,
But Edgar Guest writes as he does,
Though sound in sight and wind and limb.

DEFINITION OF A CRITIC

A critic is a feller
Not sold on a best seller
That happens to have caught the booboisie,
Till by learned lucubrations,
Tests, and subtle cerebrations
He proves it is the book it ought to be.

ESSAY ON IMITATION

Perusing Mencken's "Mercury"
(I do, although it's rough on me),
I recognize with a fond smile
The beermarks of the Master's style,
His own pet boob-bumpers and shockers
Echoed by all the little knockers
Of all varieties and ages,
Who vibrate in these virile pages.

Is it by force, I ask, or choice
Each scribe repeats his Master's voice,
Faithful as rubber stamp or stencil?
Does Mencken with his big blue pencil
Force folks who otherwise write well
To sound so strangely like H. L.?

'Tis not, I think, base imitation
But some protective coloration
That forces scribes who come between
The covers of this magazine
To lose their native patterns duller
And don its vivid verdant color.

As a chameleon at rest
Upon its Master's checkered vest
Will strive with all its little might
To match its medium aright,
So conscientious contribs must
Turn a Mercuric green or bust!

HORRORS OF SCIENCE

Science delights to magnify
All pests our granddads let alone:
The bug beneath the microscope
The nitwit at the microphone.

Bugbears and bores for ear or eye,
Harmless when instruments were weaker,
Are now enlarged in size and scope
Through high-power lenses or loud speaker.

ODE TO CONTEMPORARY HOOCH

There's so much bad in the best of it
And so much good in the worst of it
That the only final test of it
Is drinking all you durst of it.

THE RADICAL

A visionary he, 'tis said,
To butt at custom's bars.
But every time he bumps his head,
He sees such lovely stars!

CONSOLATION

We loath the prosy grievances
Pink radicals rehearse,
But when free speech annoys us,
We think, "It might be verse."

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

His parents knew he would be great,
When Willie still was very small,
From things he'd write and illustrate
With chalk upon the fence or wall.
For this, all drama critics say,
Portends a famous Broadway play.

THE BIRTH OF AN ACTOR

When any man is born all dumb,
Nature, who hates a vacuum,
Hiding her botch with daubs of paint
Bids him be all things that he ain't.

RUS IN URBE

Of all the treasures that I have
  And those that I have not,
There's nothing that I hold so dear
  As my wee garden plot;
And, combing the spring catalogue
  For seeds, I sigh for souls
Without at least a window box
  Or plants in cans or bowls.
It makes a man feel saddish
  To think of prisoned lives
With no room to keep a radish,
  Some pet artichokes or chives.
What joy from sordid business scenes
  To seek one's garden bright
And pick a mess of endocrines
  Or anchovies at night!

VENUS REDUX

"The long, slender figure is a fad," declares Lorado Taft, the famous sculptor. "Before long we shall see a return of the type of true beauty, personified by the Venus de Milo."

Now styles highty-tighty
Fit flappers too flighty
With figures as slim as a slat;
But shapes will return to
The sizes we yearn to;
Lorado assures us of that.

When figures now faddish
Make us old boys saddish,
We turn to that ancient chef d'oeuvre,
The old broken Venus,
The marble bound Venus,
The Venus that stands in the Louvre.

Of course one can't marry
Old Greek statuary,
But soon, says Lorado, we'll see
Belles once more as charmful,
As buxom an armful
As in the best era B.C.

THE HORSE ALSO RAN

See news stories on the opening of the Chicago horse show.

Shawls of green and scarves of red,
Bangles of black jet,
Were the cynosure, 'tis said,
Of the sporting set.

One who reads between the lines,
'Mid the ladies' wear,
By some subtle hint divines
That the horse was there.

The horse was at the horse show,
But overlooked, somehow.
Alas! Poor Dobbin! Does he know
He's just a clotheshorse now?

EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY

There comes for every breed of dog
An instant when his sort is slated
To set society agog
And to be biscuited and feted.

Fox terriers were once the rage;
Came then the Boston bulldog brindled;
Anon the Airedale held the stage;
The bulldog lost its grip and dwindled.

The best-bred stocks of dogs and men
Swagger a while, then slink away.
When will the Airedale bark again?
Where is the bull of yesterday?

Police pups in the wake of war
Came in like Belgian refugees;
These canine cops are class no more
With connoisseurs of pedigrees.

The pets and prize-dogs pass away;
The pampered Pekinese depart;
The big bowwows of yesterday
Are headed for the hotdog cart.

THAT TRAFFIC PROBLEM

Each week now worse that crossroad puzzle,
Thicker the cars that nose and nuzzle,
And clash and crash, and creep and crawl,
And scoot and scuttle, stop and stall,
And hoot and honk, and wail and howl,
And herd and huddle, cheek by jowl,
Ring round the rosy, and hell to pay,
Especially on the Sabbath day,
When folks who ought to be in church,
Leaving the parson in the lurch,
Fall in the far-flung flivver line,
And flock to roadhouses to dine,
Or nibble in some grassy nook
Cold delicatessen they have took.

Each week we say it's growing worse.
How shall we lift this traffic curse,
Relieve the roads of car congestion,
And solve our Sunday picnic question?
The answer is "Excelsior!"
The time has come for us to soar,
To rise above the crowded lanes
In winged cars or flivver planes

And in the uncongested air
Eat chicken cold or roast beef rare
With ice-cream cones or frozen pie,
From hot-dog blimps that hover by.

You call this bunk? Well, maybe so;
But better answer we don't know.
When we can settle things with sense
We do so at our own expense.
But when we see no answer under
The sun, we steal Art Brisbane's thunder;
And, going straight up in the air,
We ask you all to join us there.

WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS

"Episcopal dean deplores young people's ignorance of the seriousness of the nature of marriage."—*News story.*

If young folks knew as well as deans
What modern marriage really means
They'd give up their foolhardy plans
Before the deans could call the bans,
But as it is they wed in folly
And often find it rather jolly.

AN ORIGINAL CUSS

A real original, I think,
  My friend Bill can be termed;
A smoker, not inveterate,
  A drinker, not confirmed,

A hail fellow, but not well met,
A realtor, but no Babbitt;
I never knew a cuss like Bill
For cutting loose from habit.

THE CHANGING FARM

"Seize Huge Still Disguised as Farm."—*Headline.*

How decadent now are the scenes of my childhood,
When diligent dry sleuths expose them to view!
A press in the orchard, a still in the wildwood,
The old oaken bucket brimful of home brew.

OUR MOST DARING DREAM

I dreamt that when the barber said,
"What will you have upon your hair?"
I haughtily replied, "My hat!"
And left him frozen there.

ON ATHLETIC REPORTING

"*OLYMPIC SPRINTERS CANNOT WRITE,*"
Says headline, and that's good;
But here's the thing we'd like to know:
Who ever said they could?

Who runs may read, that's true indeed
(Although a trifle trite),
But who supposes athletes read
The things they're said to write?

EPITAPH

There lies beneath this mossy stone
  A politician who
Touched a live issue without gloves,
  And never did come to.

LAMENT

"The average life of a movie usher is only nineteen weeks," says the captain of ushers for a great motion-picture corporation.

Where, oh where are the lithe-limbed lads
  Who ushered us last year
With hushed directions
And genuflections,
  Salaam and civil leer?

Where, oh where are the butterfly boys,
  Soft-voiced as singing birds,
In cages marvelously gilded,
That Katz and Balaban have builded
  Too wonderful for words?

Gone, all gone, are those gentle youths
  And a new squad bows and smiles;
All good movie ushers, alas!
Die exceeding young and pass
  To far-off happy aisles.

OUR PLANET, RIGHT OR WRONG

"Earth Is Shown Rather Puny by U. C. Scientist."—*Headline.*

You've got to quit knocking our planet,
Boost, savant, or let it alone!
It's puny, perhaps, but don't pan it,
The one little planet we own!

No savant need hope to gainsay us
By gab about other star's girth;
The cosmos can all go to chaos!
We're boosting for little old earth!

BEAU BRUMMEL'S HERITAGE

"American Man Sloppily Dressed, Says British Fashion Arbiter."—*The Daily News.*

Beau Brummel was a Briton,
Best dressed of men to date;
The breeches Brummel hit on
Made John Bull truly great.
The waves of war, the pants of peace,
He rules, no rival looming
To grudge the glory that is crease,
The grandeur that is grooming.

And so the wide world round to-day,
Wherever old Sol sets,
Along the road to Mandalay,
Among the Kurds and Letts,

On John Bull in full dinner suit
The evening sun declines;
From spotless shirt and polished boot
The sunset splendor shines.

The Hottentot in dust and dirt,
The wild Australian wowser,
Worship the sheen of John Bull's shirt,
The taper of his trouser;
The Anzac envies him his spats,
Supreme in things sartorial,
And all men ape his topper hats,
Majestic, immemorial.

We Yanks may teach John Bull, indeed,
To golf and swim and pummel,
But Bond Street tailors hold the lead
They took from great Beau Brummel;
In wool and weave and cut and fit
We Yanks lag far behind;
This only John Bull must admit:
Our pockets are well lined!

SPRING LINES

In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to a smart felt,
And milady sheds her shabby tabby fur for some new pelt,
And the adman, like a madman, scribbles pretty poppycock
To beguile us with his stylus to the showing of spring stock.

Now the patter of the hatter beats the vision of Sir Launfal,
And the hymns of haberdashers shame the skylark's famous
dawn call
And the pipers in the papers lure and lead with lyric notes,
Poetizing pantalette sales, penning paeans on spring coats.

VIEWPOINTS

"It's darkest just before the dawn!"
The hopeful poet cries.
"The sun's most sanguine as he sets,"
The pessimist replies.

THE SELF-SACRIFICING CENSOR

Keeping tab on tabloids,
Muzzling magazines,
Banning books and pinching plays,
Expurgating screens,
A dog's life he must lead for sure—
A dirty dog's at that—
Immersed, to keep our morals pure,
In mud up to his hat.

VARIATION ON A SACRED THEME

Here's to the city of Boston,
The home of the bean and the ban,
Where the Gantrys keep close tab on
The books that the Babbitts scan.

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

"Breakfast foods photograph well as snow."—*Hollywood news note.*

A thin shawl wrapped about her
Out from the studio,
Out in the swirling corn flakes
The shivering star must go!

RENDEZVOUS

I'll meet you in the candy,
It's by the books, you know.
You dunno where the books are?
Well, listen, hon, you go—

But maybe it's more handy,
You got no time to lose;
Come about eleven-thirty,
I'll be in the ladies' shoes.

EXCUSEZ, S'IL VOUS PLAIT

Polite circles in New York city are now employing engraved apology cards covering "any one of fourteen social errors due to prohibition."

I did not know the drinks were hard
You served the other day;
Hence this apologetic card,
Excusez, s'il vous plait!

I don't remember just what passed,
Before I passed away;
I may have been too glum to last;
I may have been too gay.

I may have sung a ribald note,
I may have spilled my drink;
I may have told an anecdote
That turned the ladies pink.

Whatever liberties I took,
Check off this card for me;
Suppose I even kissed the cook,
Hostess, E.S.V.P.!

EFFICIENCY PROBLEM

Would our milk be any sweeter,
Would the waste be less than now,
If we put a water meter
On man's great good friend, the cow?

SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF

"A famous stylist on our staff got his inspiration for these fabrics from a mountainside in Scotland,"—*Clothing ad.*

A-searching in the cauld, cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
Our stylist found the stuff at last,
To cover thee, to cover thee,

But not a plaidie thin and scant;
It's practical, you'll be surprised.
Time was when poets used to pant—
Now pants are poetized.

ACROBAT

As the sandpiper teeters along the beach,
On the line where surf meets sand,
Keeping just out of the water's reach,
I give him a hearty hand.

He slipshoes by with his small toes dry,
No tight-rope artist's slicker,
Like a little Moses in movie poses
Dodging the Red Sea liquor.

QUIEN SABE?

"British airman, smoke-writing, falls to death."—*News item.*

Some die for battle glory;
Some die to win a bet;
One dies to tell the story
Of a well-known cigarette.
Though his slogan seem the slightest
That was ever blazoned high,
Who can say what is the tritest
Of the things for which men die?

THE CHICAGO SPIRIT

"Bandit Bares Head While He Robs Woman in Store."
—*Headline.*

Was beauty ever honored as in Chi beneath Big Bill,
Where a bandit tips his topper as he taps a lady's till,
And leveling politely an apologetic gun
Says, "Excuse my pointing, madam, but duty must be done."

POLICE ANGLES

In every little murder there's a geometric clew hid,
Very simple of solution for a cop who knows his Euclid.
Solve first for sex triangle, and if sextant shows it lacking,
Then a rum angle's the answer; 'tis a problem in hi-jacking.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

I know that there is no despising
The personal touch in advertising
But if it means a touch for me,
Who cares how personal it be?

THE BROADWAY CLASSICS

A damsel lately in distresse
Came to King Arthur's court one day,
Clad in a mystic samite dresse
And hose and shoon both new and gay.

Ye maidens asked her whence the rigge,
And she replied, "Did not ye wot?
I have been rescued by a bigge
Tin helmetman from Camelot."

THE DESTINY THAT SHAPES OUR ENDS

"American women try to be too thin. If a person is going to be fat, she will be fat."—*Dr. Lorenz.*

Man may be master of his fate,
But what's the use of that?
No woman, so physicians state,
Is mistress of her fat.

No exercise nor diet, friends,
Can do more than delay
The destiny that shapes our ends,
Reduce 'em as we may.

OUR STOCK IN TRADE

"The human body is a walking drug store," *says Dr. John Jacob Abel.*

I carry a full line, it's true,
Of serums, lymphs, and lotions,
But almost all the trade I do
Is silly little notions;
The trash I carry in my head
Keeps the whole shop from going dead.

THE PASSING OF THE BILLY

"Chicago Police Discard Time-honored Billy."—*News story.*

The policeman with a truncheon
Is only a light luncheon
For the automatic bandit of to-day;
When a bull with just a baton
Meets a gunman with a gat on,
He seldom cares molest him on his way.

So it's doomed, the dear old billy,
And the sentiment is silly
That leaves our checks with salty teardrops stained;
But although we know it's slop,
We are writing to vox pop
Insisting that the billy be retained!

No, the billy shall not pass!
We may be a silly ass,
But we cannot see ye olde time coppe displaced
With the feet he walked so flat on
And the good old oaken baton
He always wore a-hanging at his waist.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF WILLIE JONES

At the Whitman exhibit in Paris is displayed a bit of poetry by "The Good Gray Poet" on the back of a little letter written by a certain Willie Jones begging for an autograph.

A boy who builded better
Than perhaps he ever knew,
Was this Willie Jones, whose letter
Is of him the only clue.

A little nuisance, Willie,
Neither witty, wise, nor clever,
But upon his begging billet
Whitman's lines will live forever.

Shrined amid Whitmaniana
And embalmed with Walt's own bones,
Pilgrims view the Williana
Of a certain Willie Jones.

TRAGEDY OF A PROMISING YOUNG MAN

Once landed in the limelight by a promising first book,
To be what the blurbs called him he strove by hook or crook,
His rep is bound to wreck him, and his epitaph will be:
He had a modest talent he exposed immodestly.

SUPERIOR WILLIES

Only 19 per cent of the children in superior homes have a normal desire to eat, according to Chicago physician. The rest must be begged and beguiled.

Superior Willies of to-day
Deign to eat, so doctors say,
Only after mothers plead:
"Darling Willie, won't you feed?"

Closets stand with open door;
Willie raids the jam no more;
Willie wants the least and last
Piece of cake when cake is passed.

Willies wince at waffle batter,
Will not lick the frosting platter,
And, like swine refusing pearls,
Disdain doughnut boys and girls.

Willies born with silver spoons
Don't appreciate their boons;
There's no joy in the interior
Of a Willie so superior.

THE RISING GENERATION

When the rising generation
  Has (excuse our English) riz,
It will view with consternation
  Everything that now it is.

THE HOPI HOP

Hopi Indians will snake dance before congress in an effort to overcome objections to their religious exercises.

The Hopi to be happy
  Must shake his shimmy snakes;
This is the only snappy
  Amusement that he takes.

He cannot do the Charleston;
He's innocent of jazz.
This is the only real fun
The hapless Hopi has.
It may appear a queer way
To trifle with Terpsichore,
But critics most austere say
At least it isn't liquory.
He revels on the dry sands
With really truly reptiles;
No gin or Scotch or rye stands
To give him paleface pep styles
So, Solons, concentrate on
The crucial Volstead mop
And do not legislate on
The harmless Hopi hop.

POPULAR FALLACIES

"Never marry a blonde if you wish to be happy"—*Judge Graham.*

Except of course to flatter,
Or to make an idle joke,
The color is no matter
In a woman or a smoke.

The light ones may be killers,
And the dark ones may be mild;
Not the wrappers, but the fillers,
Make cigars or women wild.

THE HICKS HEARD ROUND THE WORLD

Against the pleadings of her chamber of commerce, the advice of her realtors, and the editorials of her two weekly newspapers, Hicksville, L. I., has voted 994 to 317 to keep the name Hicksville.

All hail these hearts of hickory, who scorning slickers slick,
Fought and prevailed, though realtors railed, that Hicksville should stay hick!
While board of trade and press surveyed high sounding nomenclature,
These sturdy souls strode to the polls and voted back to nature.

'Mid booster sneers and Babbitt tears and broadside editorial
Still free from scathe they kept old faith and freedom immemorial;
Where stood the rustic polling place, its flag to the May winds unfurled,
The hicks of Hicksville came and cast the ballot heard around the world.

Come rally round, good yeomen all, the flag of this embattled band!
By old-time names and old-time ways your fireside and your farms shall stand;
So shun the realtor shibboleth, the city lure, the booster call;
United thus the farm shall stand and subdivided fall!

PROBLEM OF THE NEANDERTHAL MAN

Some say the late Neanderthaler
Must have been bright as a new dollar;
Others the self-same skull will pore on
And say he was a perfect moron.
We, with our compromising way,
Guess he was like most men to-day,
Not over bright nor boobish all—
Just 100 per cent Neanderthal.

MARITAL TRAGEDY

A modernist married a fundamentalist wife,
And she led him a catechism and dogma life.

EVOLUTION IN A NUTSHELL

What biped fares more miserably
  Than Man, that melancholy mammal,
Descended from the chimpanzee
  And evoluting toward the camel?

What sight more sad for sage to see
  Than Man indomitably marching
Out from the Darwin jungle tree
  Into the Volstead desert parching?

THE MODERN BIBLE

In the manner of Bruce Barton

Jacob paid a pretty penny
For Joseph's particolored benny,
In which he made a big mistake
But everything would have been jake,
If he had bought a dozen others
For Joseph's jealous elder brothers.
You can't keep peace in families
By showing partialities,
So, fathers, do not be too close;
Buy your bennies by the gross,
And don't be miserly or surly
In buying fur coats for the girlie.

TO THE REAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

They've made you one of our real pals,
The George that no one knew;
They've told us how you liked the gals
And loved your liquor, too.

Great father of the U. S. A.
No more to us, by gad!
We give you the glad hand to-day
And call you simply dad!

OUR NATIONAL OVERHEAD

"Billion Spent Yearly in Barber Chairs."—*Headline.*

A billion for bingling,
Shaves, shampoos, and shingling,
And mud packs and tonics so called;
Compute, if you dare to,
The bills hair is heir to,
And envy the totally bald!

THE COMPLETE CANDIDATE

With plenteous apologies to W. S. Gilbert

I have killed a little kiddy for the coral round its neck,
And I mean to kill another by and by;
I have planned a little burglary and forged a little check,
But, gentlemen, I'm dry!

I am fond of filthy lucre, and I cheat at bridge and euchre,
But I'll knock the liquor interests down and out;
Thanks, gents, for your indorsement; I guarantee enforcement.
My middle name is drought.

DISTINCTION

People may talk shop at a party,
And I don't mind unless it's arty,
But there should be a law to stop
Artistic poseurs who talk shoppe.

THE POET FLEES

Acknowledgements to Lew Sarrett for lines; the italics are ours.

God, let me flower as I will!
With never a class to teach!
For I am weary of the chill
Of the N. U. school of speech.
Companionship of waxen vines,
Classes of fair coeds
And hot-house-nurtured columbines,
Poor little pumpkinheads.
Oh, weary of the pruning knife,
Wielded by prexy or dean,
That shapes my prim, decorous life—
Like a home-grown string bean.
God, let me flower as I will
Or, if I will, go to seed,
A shaggy rambler on a hill,
With only the brooks to read.

THE HIGHER BRANCHES

"Auto Driving Classed as Art.—*Headline.*

On auto driving as an art
Be wary of embarking;
No sooner does a student start
Than he must take up parking;

And parking, of all sciences,
Most abstruse, savants call—
Without the fourth dimension
One gets no place at all.

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

We hear of it from south sea roamers;
It's something gathered by beach combers;
We've not seen flotsam yet, nor jetsam,
But soon we're going out to get some.

Then all aboard for Honolulu,
For Tahiti, Fiji, Guam, and Sulu!
We'll not be back until we've got some
Genuine jetsam and some flotsam!

DEDUCTIONS OF A WET

The voice of the people is husky, and parched is the popular tongue;
It's only by signs an observer divines demand for the spigot and bung;
But though there is scarcely a sound from vox-popular chords cracked and dry,
At the mention of drink one detects, I do think, a gleam in the popular eye,
A gulp of the popular gullet, a licking of popular chops,
Which shows what vox pop might say oiled with a crop of the old-fashioned essence of hops.

THE HEADLESS FLAPPER

The headless statue found by the Field-Museum-Oxford expedition at Kish has been identified as a Sumerian flapper.

They've found a flapper back in Kish,
Old-fashioned as a man could wish,
Unbobbed, unpainted, and unread,
You see, she hasn't any head.

Her head is missing but unbobbed;
Her face is ditto but undaubed;
As dumb as any dame to-day,
She shows it in a franker way.

Though scorning highbrow parts as needless
And just as headless as she's heedless,
Unlike the Milo lacking arms,
She clings to all essential charms.

EGOTISM

Sparrows think telephonic wires
  Were strung for birds to sit on;
Man thinks it made for his desires,
  This globe he has but lit on.

ODE TO THE FALL BOOKS

Like colored foliage in that pride
  Which goes before the fall,
You come in jackets gaily pied
  As autumn's gorgeous pall.

Some few of you will catch the eye
  And earn a pretty penny,
But most of you are doomed to die
  Unseen among so many.

How many green young authors sigh
  In disappointment bitter
As their bright hopes get sere and dry
  In autumn's lit'ry litter.

THE LAST ILLUSION

"There was as much suggestion on the costume of the Hayes administration," says a suburban editorialist, "as even in this transition stage in our Evanston parks on the lake front."

Ah, spare our faith in the blameless days
Of that benign president, Rutherford Hayes,
When men wore whiskers and women wore hoops,
As we see with awe in the album groups.

Say there is promise in flaming youth
And bathing beauties—you may speak sooth—
But sling no mud at the modest ways,
When men were statesmen and women wore stays.

Plead the cause of the sheik and flask,
But spare the beaver, the bustle, and basque.
Mid modern chaos and wild confusion
Let us cling to one last illusion.

Leave us still in this changing age
The right to turn to the pictured page
And pore over types from the prudent days
Of that proper president, Rutherford Hayes.

NEWS FOR GRANDPA

Modern girls do exactly the things their grandmothers wanted to do but didn't have the nerve to, a Chicago grandma tells the press.

Flaming youth displays the fires
Of grandma's long-suppressed desires;
Grandma's cool exterior lied—
She was awful hot inside.
Back when grandpa used to date her,
She was like a dormant crater;
Nice old grandpa never knew
What she wanted him to do.

COLUMN POET'S NIGHTMARE

Each day he soars on fancy's flight,
A sea of print to pass,
His nightmare lest midway he might
Run out of gas.

While frisking lightly overhead
You see this poet clown,
He fears his meter may go dead
And let him down.

And watching him in tiptop flight,
Ah, little do you know
How careful are his flipflops light,
You boobs below!

His levity is full of doubt;
He never can forget
That Ole Man Gravity is out
To get him yet!

SLAMS OF LIFE

Lives of great men all remind us
We must look what we're about;
The biographers will get us
If we don't watch out.

We must shake the scribes behind us;
Yes, if we would be sublime
We must cover up our footprints
On the sands of time.

WANTED:
DILLS FROM CONTENTED CUCUMBERS

"Wartless pickles are the crying need of America today."—*The National Association of Pickle Manufacturers.*

Savants have found an answer for
The pits and snares of perspiration;
Cruel pyorrhoea plagues no more,
Repulsed by dental preparation;

Our skins you love to touch to-day;
Our milch-cows are contented;
Our halitosis, so they say,
Is largely circumvented.

Metal can never touch our skin,
Shielded by garters justly boasted;
Cereals and cigarettes have been
Perfected by our process toasted;
One pressing problem now remains,
First among pickle-eating nations,
Still shamefaced Uncle Sam retains
Unsightly warts on his pet rations.

In time of peace prepare for warts;
Improve our gherkin and our dill!
Chemist with test-tubes and retorts,
Gardeners with spade and hoe and drill;
Burbank and graft, blend and combine,
Breed us a sleek unblemished pickle,
Worthy to stand beside our line
Of cows and pigs and pumpernickel.

THE LONGEST WAY ROUND IS THE SHORTEST WAY HOME

Does Bermuda know its onions?
Do Bostonians know beans?
No, indeed! All native products
Get their fame in foreign scenes.

Does Chicago know her playwrights,
Poets, novelists, or pork?
Not until she sees 'em played up
In dispatches from New York.

OUR RECIPE

We take the books we like the best
And put the gist of them in jest
And put the jest in little jingles,
Where sense with sound sublimely mingles.

AFFLATUS

Old Bill McFee must snuff the sea
(Bill bounds upon the billow);
Lew Sarrett's lines must smell of pines
(Lew pounds a balsam pillow);
Carl Sandburg sniffs our stockyards whiffs
And finds his inspiration;
So many minds, so many kinds of
Verse and ventilation.

SPECULATION

"America Gave Me a Chance," *by Edward W. Bok.*

If Edward Bok had stayed in Dutch,
A dreadful thought indeed!
Would this U. S. amount to much?
What would we wear and read?

Could we have built us bungalows
  Without his guiding hand?
Would women's hats and skirts and hose
  Have been so wisely planned?

Would Irvin Cobb have had a job?
  Would peace have had a prize?
Would it have dawned upon the mob
  It pays to advertise?

Who shows us all the things we lack?
  Who moved the merchants' stock?
The U. S. A. has sure got back
  The boost it gave to Bok.

THE BACK TRAIL

The pioneers came hiking west,
  Hard work for man and beast;
Their sons now face a tougher test,
  To fight their way back east.

For now all sons of western men
  Who have their fathers' souls
Forsake the plowshare for the pen
  And plod to eastern goals.

Westward the course of empire ran
  In Horace Greeley's day,
But now, "Go east, young lit'ry man!"
  All sound wiseacres say.

Go east but write about the west!
That's how a name is won,
As Hamlin Garland has confessed,
And Sherwood Anderson.

DIVERS DISTINCTION

A has a tale
That has gone into Braille
And a couple of books in limp leather,
But B's been translated
In languages stated
At upward of ten altogether,
(Including the Scandinavian).

C likes to speak
Of his "Book of the Week",
So called by the Saturday "Voice".
D views C with pity.
The "Book Club Committee"
Picked D for its monthly first choice
(By a three to two vote).

E's novel lands
The big prize of ten grands
And a cinema contract on trial;
But F, it is clear,
Is the man of the year
With two thousand bucks from the Dial
(And enormous prestige in creative circles).

G is a bard
Whose lays have been starred
  By Braithwaite again and again;
But H twangs a lyre
That the great Untermeyer
  Compares to Nathalia Crane
    (Not to mention Homer and Milton).

The Pulitzer prize
Jury voted for I's
  Last novel, but what does that get?
'Twas J got the purse,
Since, for better, for worse,
  That jury is always upset.

K's "Washington" got
Praise all over the lot
  From critic and lit'ry connooser;
But profs in a rage
Made L's life front page;
  L played up poor George as a boozer!

PETER, PETER, PUMPKIN EATER

In the manner of Michael Arlen

Petah, Petah, pumpkin eatah,
Had a wife and couldn't keep her . . .
He put her in a flat in Mayfair,
But even so she wouldn't play fair.
She flirted with a big beef-eatah,
Alas! He never knew! Poor Petah!

THE NEW MYTHOLOGY

"Carl Peters is not altogether a satyr, and not quite a faun. He is far too rich; he has gone the pace. He knows himself to be something very like a bounder."—*See Percy Marks' novel, "Lord of Himself".*

Not quite a satyr and hardly a faun,
Of the sort that are starred in the screen ads,
Our hero was still irresistibly drawn
By Broadway Bacchantes and maenads.
He wasn't the man you would pick for a Pan,
Goat-footed old pagan and chaser!
But yet in pursuit of the maenads he ran
Like a regular Marathon racer.

He knew in his soul he was loved for his roll,
Berating himself as a bounder,
But his wild pagan spirit he couldn't control—
It made him a regular rounder.
He hadn't the hoof that a classical fan
Expects in the satyr of habit;
How tragic the soul of old goat-footed Pan
In the body and clothes of a Babbitt.

WHEN IS A LADY LIKE A LOBSTER?

"The Hard Boiled Virgin," *by Frances Newman.*

A lady in our lit'ry scene,
Like lobster, it is said,
Goes unregarded while she's green
But hard boiled will be read.

FEATHERING THE FISH NEST

"Goldfish Culture for Amateurs," *by A. E. Hodge and Arthur Derham.*

A home at which goldfish won't turn up their tails
Should be tastefully furnished with winkles and snails,
Shells, weeds, and a castle, since goldfish require
Some privacy, too, when inclined to retire.

If boudoir and bait have been rightly arranged,
Mr. Goldfish and mate are not nightly estranged,
And so some fine day to their well-feathered nest,
You will see the stork bring little fish of the best.

DECISIVE BATTLES OF HISTORY

"Selim the Sot lived and died in his flower gardens by the Bosporus. The war with Venice in 1570 is said to have been provoked by Selim, who loved the wine of Cyprus, then an appanage of the republic, and wished to assure himself a constant supply."—"The Turks in Europe", *by W. E. D. Allen.*

Selim the Sot played a pacifist role
  In the militant Ottoman story;
A Turkish King Cole, Selim stuck to his bowl,
  A glutton for all things but glory.
He lived and he died by the Bosporus tide,
  Amid bevies of bottles and beauties,
For roses and revels content to let slide
  All calls to more serious duties.

Once only did Selim the Sot have to meet
A crisis that brooked no evasion.
His liquor ran low, and with no way to treat,
War only would suit the occasion.
"Lord Admiral Lala Mustafa!" he cried,
"Sail forth with your corsairs and go get
The vintage of Cyprus, for which, now denied,
We suffer the tortures of Tophet."

So Lala Mustafa sailed out with his fleet—
The tale would fill many a canto;
How the Islamite thirst forced the Christians to treat,
Though the bottle seemed lost at Lepanto.
But the Mussulman host won the Cyprian coast,
And Selim the Sot lived to quaff a
Victorious toast of the stuff he loved most
To his bootlegger, Lala Mustafa.

PROCRUSTES: OR THE FUTURE OF POETRY

"Why are we drifting back to magazine verse?" *asks The Saturday Review.*

A Dante now is doomed to do short filler,
To tuck beneath some woolly western thriller;
The modern Milton cramps his style to fit
What aperture the ads allow for it;
A Homer now must have his heels and head
Lopped off and pruned on a Procrustean bed;
The tailpiece trade alone promotes the sale of
Poems ye ed makes neither head nor tail of.

THE CREATIVE URGE

Some itch to etch, some pant to paint,
  Still others sigh to scribble,
But our creative urge is faint,
  At art we only nibble.

Our vice is one, we pine to pun,
  Of "lit" the last gradation;
But none so well combines with fun
  That craving for creation.

BUTTON, BUTTON, WHO HAS THE BUTTON?

"Button Gwinnett, Signer of the Declaration of Independence," *by Charles Francis Jenkins.*

Consider Button Gwinnett now, whose greatest claim to fame
Is seen in the infrequency with which he signed his name.
He signed the declaration that made our nation free,
And then and there swore nevermore to scribble his B. G.

He never wrote in ladies' books of album-sentiments,
He never signed the dotted line for smooth persuasive gents,
He seldom wrote a letter and he never signed a check;
He wouldn't sign a legal form to save his lawyer's neck.

And what was the result of this for poor old Button Gwinnett?
He could not have foreseen, I ween, what signal fame was in it,

How opulent collectors would rummage high and low
For Button Gwinnett's autograph, that most unique John Doe.

It isn't much to look at, but it's very, very rare,
And the price that's put upon it only button kings can bear,
It's a warning to all great men who would make their lives sublime
Not to leave too many footprints upon the sands of time.

PIPES ON PARADE

"The Pipe Book," *by Alfred Dunhill.*

The pipe that Cap'n John Smith fetched
From Powhatan's demesne,
The pipe at which poor Raleigh retched
To entertain his queen,
The pipe that made King James the First,
Stopping the royal nose,
Against this instrument accurst,
His counterblast compose.

Starting with this, the primal clay,
The peaceful calumet,
The pipes parade, in strength arrayed,
And growing stronger yet.
Churchwardens slim, pipes short and grim,
The cutty and dudeen,
Pipes hooked and straight and rough and trim,
Magnificent and mean.

The rustic cob, the urban brier,
The calabash exotic,
The monstrous blend of wet and fire,
At which the Turk despotic,
Lolling in his luxurious scene,
Inhales with double trouble
The smoke of that debauched machine
He dubs the hubble-bubble.

The Meerschaum whose artistic hues,
Not to be matched in oils,
The Teuton through long years imbues
With unremitting toils.
His very breath of life he'll spend
Before this reeking shrine,
That in his old age he may end
With something rare and fine.

All these and pipes of other stripes,
Each of peculiar glory,
You'll find displayed in fairest types
In Alfred Dunhill's story.
Down fags and snipes! Hail, famous pipes!
Long may your tribe increase!
Great calumet, be with us yet
And puff the way to peace!

THE BETTER HALF OF IT

"Wives," *by Gamaliel Bradford.*

Plutarchian biography, for all its boasted wit,
Left out of every story the better half of it,
But when our Mr. Bradford has done a great man's life,
He lets us have the lowdown in a book about his wife.

Though Arnold was a traitor, to duty derelict,
It's fair to say he bargained as a faithful Benedict;
He sold his country's fortress for eternal hoots and hisses
To buy some London laces for his lovely little Mrs.

And then there's old Jeff Davis, a great man in his day,
The Yanks were out to hang him, but he would not run
away,
Till Mrs. Jeff convinced him 'twas his duty to escape
And sent him out appareled in her party dress and cape.

In judging President Madison, historians to come
Will tell us that his Dolly was beautiful but dumb;
You can't expect a show down on any great man's life,
Until you have the lowdown on his loving little wife.

DEEP STUFF

Sampling the books the moderns bring,
In honesty I must confess
I liked the old Pierian spring
More than the "stream of consciousness."

'Twas just a shallow, surface seep,
That crystal, classic spring, I know,
And yet, why should we bore so deep
To get this muddy modern flow?

THE DELIGHTS OF COUNTRY LIFE

HORACE, EPODES: 2

Beatus ille qui procul negotiis.

Happy the man who far from sin and strife,
Tills his paternal acres day by day
And finds the peace that only rural life
Gives unalloyed, so urban poets say;
But, oh, thrice blest that tiller of the soil,
The hero of this rarely honest ditty,
Upon whose land the driller brings in oil
Enough to keep the farmer in the city.

PHAETHON

Young Phaethon was Old Sol's son and nephew of
J. Pluvius,
As you can find, if you've a mind, in Ovid or Vitruvius.
A beamish boy, his old sire's joy, of sunny disposition,
Save for this cloud, that he allowed himself one mad
ambition.
Too young by far to drive a car, he gave his pa no peace,
Begging to steer the solar bus about the skies of Greece.

Alas, one day, old Sol, they say, sick with solicitations,
Said, "Take 'er, son, but do not run above speed regulations;
Keep to my track, the zodiac, with fool-proof signs to mark;
Look out for little comets and be careful where you park."
So off he went, that innocent, a warning for all time
How foolish boys with high-power toys to heights of folly climb.

Slow at the start, he soon took heart and stepping on the gas,
Set out to show the world below his cleverness and class;
The solar car swung fast and far out of its 'customed track
As Sol's mad heir, now here, now there, zigzagged the zodiac,
Snorting, cavorting, skidding, the whole wide world around,
With consequences permanent and frightfully profound.

The Eskimos, so lately froze, their igloos lost, and icicles,
Storing their sleds, they lived in sheds, and rode around on bicycles.
On Afric plains the Nordic strains in heat unheard of sizzled;
Black to this day, their skins portray how then they fried and frizzled;
Their hair burned crisp to the last wisp hints how this mad boy gave
To every head in Africa a permanent heat wave.

From dawn to dark this hot young spark cavorted and careered
And showed no sign of slowing down, as moon and stars appeared;
Great Zeus on high bade him stand by; he did not heed the whistle;
The thunder rolled, Zeus knocked him cold with one unerring missile.
And that is all. Great was the fall (see Ovid and Vitruvius)
Of Phaethon, good old Sol's son and nephew of J. Pluvius.

ACTAEON

Once Artemis in Arcady beside a woodland pool
Shed skirt and quiver and with a shiver stepped in the crystal cool;
Her nymphs, as bare of underwear as any Broadway cast,
Splashed after her—believe me, sir, a chorus unsurpassed.
Little they knew, this maiden crew, who watched them with wide eye,
A nice young chap who by ill hap had happened to come by;
Actaeon, he, in forestry first in his college class,
On woodland rounds, with horn and hounds, that pool had chanced to pass.
Though pure of heart, he viewed nude art with natural sympathy,
And which of us can say that we might not have done as he?
Charmed and amazed he gaped and gazed, well sheltered in a thicket,

On a display that scalpers say's worth seven bucks a ticket,
Till by ill luck, after a duck raising her dripping head
The goddess spied how she was eyed and in high passion
said:

"Mean mortal wight, you watch our rite and basely skulking there
Would turn our maiden exercise into a stag affair?
Turn stag in truth, take horn and tooth and hoof and hide and hair
And lurk a hunted fugitive within some leafy lair!"

Beneath her scorn he felt a horn bud on his boyish brow,
But worst of all his trusty dogs no longer knew him now;
They nipped his hide until he died, teaching all good Greeks this:
There are sorority affairs which stags would better miss.

REFLECTION

Each marble Venus vaunted
From a pedestal to-day
Was once a show girl flaunted
On some ancient great white way.

The Melos was applauded
By Tyre business men, they say;
And the Medici now lauded
Made the Sidon "Scandals" pay.

IN MEMORIAM

SATURNALIA, Dec. 17 to 23.—*Roman Calendar.*

Now is the time Horatius sat
  Snug in locus classicus,
Lapping light liquor from a vat
  On mellow old Mount Massicus;
And rousingly Horatius led
  The toast—what tongue now knows it?—
Deadest of words in language dead,
  "*Boni sodales, prosit!*"

THE CLASSICS IN A NUTSHELL

HOMER'S ODYSSEY

Odysseus was the man whose mate
Sat up for him home ten years late,
And when, toward dawn, he tiptoed in,
She did not ask him where he'd been,
But merely said, "Not so much noise!
Step softly or you'll wake the boys,"
Referring to some forty sheiks,
Who had been courting her for weeks.
Whereat he whispered, "Where's my bow?
Beyond a doubt these birds must go."
She went and got his bow and arrows;
He shot them like so many sparrows,
While she looked on with joyous laughter,
And they lived happy ever after.

WHAT PRICE BEAUTY?

HORACE, ODES 1-16

O matre pulchrâ filia pulchrior

O daughter fairer than thy mother fair,
  Praised be the scalpel gifted
That from thy visage every line of care
  Has lifted.

Helen, the fairest Hellas ever lamped,
  Grew ugly, it is told,
Aging before these days of vamps revamped,
  New vamps for old.

Cleo, who made the Roman world run red,
  Age found a way to wither;
No doctor then could save her smile that said
  "Come hither!"

O Grave, where is thy victory to-day?
  Where, Age, thy triumph hideous?
Thanks to the surgeon skilful in delay,
  The fleshly Phidias.

O better than thy mother good-as-new
  (Thanks to repairs extensive),
Beauty comes high, but who shall say it's too
  Expensive?

FISHER, BEWARE!

MARTIAL IV.30. *Baiano procul a lacu monemus.*

No trespass in this Lucrine lake, beware!
Run, angler, run, temptation waits you there!
In yonder water swim a holy school
Of fishes, sacred to Domitian's rule,
That know their emp and come to lick his hand,
Than which there is none greater in the land.
Each has a name and, such is his control,
They turn up smiling when he calls the roll.

Once on a time (this here's the honest dope)
From that there lake a wicked Ethiope
Snaking a monster of the largest size,
Found that his hook had cost him both his eyes.
Struck blind because he set the law at naught,
He could not lamp the lamprey he had caught.
And now, repenting his illegal sport,
He begs from all who visit this resort.

Stranger, be warned by that unlucky skate.
Toss, if you like, yon pets some hookless bait;
Revere these goldly game fish as you should,
And beat it! fisher, while the going's good!

OLD TALES RETOLD

"Just as Leander swam the Hellespont," *says an Associated Press dispatch from Peoria, Illinois*, "so Cecil Rowley of Canton swam Cooper's creek Monday night to marry Verne Kennedy of Peoria."

At Cooper's creek by Canton town—
The creek was up, the bridge was down.
The night was very dark and scowly,
When out strode dauntless Cecil Rowley.
He eyes the flood and did not falter—
A woman waited at the altar.
So plunging boldly as Leander
And paddling like the old gray gander
He landed—Greece, where is thy gloria?—
Quite punctually at Peoria
With mud upon his new blue serge
That could not check his nuptial urge
Nor mar his beauty to the bride
For whom he swam the raging tide
To win Peoria's fairest daughter,
Defying Hellas and high water.

ICONOCLASM THAT HURTS

We do not mind young writers
Who call old heroes blighters;
  Of villains there are always plenty more.
It's the cheap iconoclast
Who takes villains of the past
  And proves that they were heroes makes us sore

There was Nero, our pet ogre,
Who held orgies in a toga;
  They say he never earned his villain name.

They've made our monster Nero,
A namby-pamby hero,
And we are here to tell you it's a shame.

PREHISTORIC GOLD DIGGERS

"A manicure set of tweezers and pick in solid gold has a curiously modern look."—*Report of the British Museum Expedition to Ur of the Chaldees.*

We know by yon gold pick and tweezers
There was a manicure in Ur,
And doubtless old Chaldean geezers
Were neatly trimmed by her.

A HARDY PERENNIAL

"There always has been and always will be petting."—*Elinor Glyn in* "The Passion Called Love."

What time the pyramids were new
The painted chariots would park,
And Egypt's dusky sons would woo,
As modern sheiks do after dark.

The hot mama of days B.C.
Was warm as any we now know;
So much, all learned men agree,
The songs of burning Sappho show.

Along the well-known Appian way,
And other roads that led to Rome,
Couples would congregate, they say,
And there was giggling in the gloam.

In tunics short or trousers wide,
  Neath shingle bobs or classic curls,
However clad and clipped and dyed,
  Boys will be boys and girls be girls.

What's news to-day in Hollywood
  Was applesauce in Babylon,
And what was tosh in Troy is good
  For Mrs. Glyn to gabble on.

FROM TYPES OF PAN, 1919

What shall I call my tiny wit?
A pebble dropped in an endless pit,
Striking those dark, unyielding walls—
But tinkling, tinkling! as it falls.

SPIDER AND SPINNER

Arachne spins a gauzy net
  That floats and shimmers on the lawn;
By noon that web is fouled and rent
  Which hung so perfect at the dawn;
And when the wind of evening stirs,
  Arachne's gossamers are gone.
Arachne, as no doubt you guess,
  Arachne is the daily press.

Grave Clio weaves through circling years
  Her age-enduring tapestry,
Of threads of gold and gossamer,
  The warp and woof of history;

But since her threads she filches from
Arachne's webs, 'tis hard to see
Where ends the web Arachne spins,
Where Clio's filament begins.

MIRAGE

"The fighting was suspended owing to a mirage, but upon this lifting our defensive continued."—*British report.*

Still waters glimmering between still palms,
Or ruffled dark by flaws of scented air,
Vine tendrils, fern, the soft green living things
A desert dream holds out to travelers there.

What wonder if the fitful firing broke,
And quiet brooded on the burning sands,
While eye and heart yearned toward that faery isle,
As men to peace in other greener lands.

LINES TO A ROAST WATER FOWL

At dawn you slept upon a stone,
All melancholy and alone,
A-dreaming of the summer's joys,
Your mallard mate, the pleasant ploys
By False Presque Isle.

How false, alas, I weep to tell it!
Woe worth the gun that sped the pellet!
It was not mine—I do but dine
On thy reliques by False Presque Isle.

And yet, sweet fowl, thy end was blest.
Like finest gold you stood the test
Of shrewdest flame and made a roast
That Brillat Savarin would boast,
By False Presque Isle.

'Tis hard, dear bird, for you to lack
The still bay girt with tamarack;
But know that you were duly prized,
By onion wept and fletcherized
By False Presque Isle.

PIERRE L'HERMITE

What time I fish with rod and reel
Along the reeds of False Presque Isle,
I watch the hermit of the place,
A great Blue Heron, he, by race,
We call him Peter, or Pierre,
Because he eats the frogs 'round there.

Aloof from care or strife or fear,
Upon one leg he poses near;
But let a frog so much as hop,
He seems all neck and bill and crop.
A whirlwind, he, what time he turns
His mind to practical concerns.

Fact is, suspicion will persist,
He is a sort of egotist.
He has no chick nor child nor egg,

But knows and shows he has a leg.
He keeps his bachelor estate,
Nor ever seems to miss a mate.

He'll watch me peevishly reel back
My empty, vain Dowagiac.
Though for his thoughts I cannot vouch,
He seems to chide me for my grouch;
As who should say, "What's life, old chap?
A leg, a log, a frog, a nap."

UPS AND DOWNS

From the Palatine Anthology.

Your paunch is round and near the ground,
  Your neck is long and slender,
The notes that gurgle from your throat
  Are musical and tender.

I thirst for your companionship,
  My jolly old decanter,
So full of quips and quaint conceits
  And pleasantries and banter.

But tell me gossip, why when I
  Am dry, you full of sherry,
Your spirits sink the more I drink,
  And ebb as I grow merry.

HEROES OF FICTION

How many thousand readers greet
Tarzan, half ape, but incomplete,
And wait, with interest never stale,
For sequels to complete his tail!

If sales a trusty index be,
Of vogue and popularity—
A fact you simply can't escape—
The apex goes to this ex-ape.

NOAH, 1919

If good old Noah were here to-day,
He would not build in the olden way;
He would not hammer and peg an ark;
He'd hie to the back yard after dark,
And dig and delve in the cool, dark ground
A cellar an hundred cubits round.

And when that cellar was delved and digged,
The bins all laid and the tackle rigged,
He'd hoist to rest in the cool, dark ground
The critters he loved from the whole world round.
He'd lower the demijohns, two by two,
And the little fat kegs of Milwaukee brew,

The squat black bottles with squirrel inside,
The little pinch bottles from over the tide,

The magnums marching in stately pairs,
The flasks in couples with monkish airs,
These and more, like a chubby mole,
Noah would stow in his cubby hole.

Honest Noah! that good old man!
What would he do when the drought began?
Would he pity and let them in,
Shem and Japhet and all his kin?
Could he, fresh from the flowing spout,
Watch poor Ham when his tongue hung out?

Well, I wager he'd pause and think
Twice at least on the cellar's brink.
"Durn their hides," he would likely say,
"Why did they go for to vote that way?
Going dry in the flood was pie
To keeping wet when the world is dry."

PERVIGILIUM MONACHI

Cras amet qui numquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet.

Hymn of Cypris, Aphrodite, golden litany of love,
Haunting challenge of the wanton, of the serpent to the dove;
Did that old grey monk who traced it, handing on the lilting line,
See the myrtle and the dancers, feel the swirl of love and wine?

Did it warm the lonely vigil in his cold grey cell of stone,
Lifting him above his Credo and the masses he would drone?

Cras amet qui numquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet—

If our monk had known the Latin, would the song be living yet?
Was his labor penitential, in a chain of daily screeds,
Did he do it for Religion, telling out the lines as beads?
Yes, I often idly wonder, often think of him as odd,
Handing down the torch of Venus to the glory of his God.

SONGS OF THE UNDERWORLD

HORACE, ODES, 2, 13, 21 SQ.

Quam paene furvae regna Proserpinae

Where burning Sappho sings her song
In Hades no one listens long;
Their life, no doubt, is hot enough
Without that calorific stuff.
The shades all push and crowd, 'tis said,
To hear Alcaeus wake the dead
With martial cadences as catchy
And twice as ancient as Pagliacci.

So Horace sang, but now, we fancy,
He's wiser in his necromancy.
Suppose that snappy stuff like Al's
Goes bigger here than Dick LeGal's;
On that side Styx all heads are clear,
There is no bone from ear to ear.

Those necropolitan elite,
The Plutocrats of Pluto street,
Have learned a thing or two we know
From all the clever folk below.
They know Falernian and Massic,
How Pegasus annexed the Classic,
And Hercules caused quite a fuss
By tying cans to Cerberus.
Ah, yes, friend Horace, I dare swear,
Your Sapphics get a hand down there.

VARIATIONS ON HORACE

Here's a slap for saucy Pyrrha
  And the thorns her roses wear,
Pity for the lad that's tangled
  In the meshes of her hair.

Doting fool, his hopes will founder,
  As the winds awake that sleep,
Now the catspaw that caresses,
  Then the black and angry deep.

Happy thou, to sit in safety
  High and dry upon the shore,
Fling thy dripping weeds to Neptune,
  Chase the golden girl no more.

Yet, I fear me, should she sparkle,
  Should she smile again for thee,
Thou wouldst trim thy shattered pinnace
  And put out again to sea.

TO ALCIMUS

MARTIAL, I, 88.

Alcime, quem raptum domino crescentibus annis.

Alcimus, lost to thy master at the dawn of thy young day,
Now the sod lies light upon you where you rest beside the way.
Take from me no gift of marble, stone or Paros, builded high,
Idle tribute to thy ashes, doomed to topple by and by,
But the pliant box, the shadows of the close protecting vine,
And the green, green grass above you, still bedewed with tears of mine.
Take, dear lad, this simple record of thy loving master's pain;
With each rising generation, Alcimus shall live again.
When the grim relentless spinner shall have spun my final thread,
Even so may I be gathered to my place among the dead.

FROM SPLINTERS, 1921

THE HUMORIST

He must not laugh at his own wheeze:
A snuff box has no right to sneeze.

OUR AIM

Some sigh for gales of laughter;
Some whistle for a wheeze:
I merely aim to riffle
Your risibilities.

I like to prod the piffle
With which the press is full,
Or, like the banderillo,
Pin ribbons on the bull.

THE PARENTAL CRITIC

We cannot bear to roast a book
Nor brutally attack it;
We lay it gently on our lap
And dust its little jacket.

THE DURABLE BON MOT

When Whistler's strongest colors fade,
When inks and canvas rot,
Those jokes on Oscar Wilde he made
Will dog him unforgot.

For gags still set the world agog,
When fame begins to flag,
And, like the tail that wagged the dog,
The smart tale dogs the wag.

SAFETY FIRST

That serial I'm reading had me scared, it did!
The hero started speeding and looked sure to skid;
The heroine seemed slipping (and she did, almost)
But they can't get very naughty in the Sat. Eve. Post.

Our hero turned the corner without spill or shock;
The gal is no forlorner, thanks to good Saint Bok!
So never, never worry if they start to coast,
For they never hit the bottom in the Sat. Eve. Post.

It may look like a joy ride, when the couple starts,
But our author takes the safe side in the slippy parts.
The ride will not be tippy, though they tope a tub
For the ale is never nippy at the Curtis Pub.

HEART BLOBS

In the manner of Edgar Guest

Home ain't home till you can spot,
  By thumb prints on the wall,
Just where each little tad and tot
  Played up and down the hall.
Oh, take away your spotless towns
  And marble halls, by cricky!
For home ain't home to him that frowns,
  Because the walls are sticky.

No, home ain't home without a tint
  Above the cedar chest,
To show where laddie's peppermint
  Was forcibly impressed.
And home ain't home without a hint,
  A blot, a blob, a splotch
That keeps for aye the golden glint
  Of lassie's butter scotch.

If you would always have those spots
  That home ain't home without,
Feed taffy to the little tots,
  Let sorghum stand about!
For, folks, when all is done and said,
  I say, with father feeling,
Home's home where happy kiddies spread
  Molasses, floor to ceiling.

SONG

In the manner of Sara Teasdale

Love, I do feel a nameless fear,
  I scarce dare breathe aloud,
Watching yon little withered moon,
  Wrapped in her wisp of cloud:

For she may grow as when we met,
  As opulent and bright,
But, love, when shall I be again
  Full, as I was that night?

LAI D'ORELAY

Georgie Moorgie, pudding and pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry.
But Mother Goose dared not to hint
What Georgie Moore would put in print.

AE

A calm, green, lovely seagirt isle,
Worn mariners and Circe's smile,
Black spells—such antique witchery
Lies in that syllable AE.
But white thy magic, mystic sage,
Calm in a fistic day and age.

Wave on, AE, that wand, thy pen!
Shed calm and beauty on wild men.
So thy green isle in the Atlantic,
So gay, so fay, sometimes so frantic,
Erin, for magic spells but mild,
The new AEAEA shall be styled.

EFFERVESCENCE AND EVANESCENCE

We've found this Scott Fitzgerald chap
  A chipper, charming child;
He's taught us how the flappers flap,
And why the whipper-snappers snap,
  What makes the women wild.
But now he should make haste to trap
  The ducats in his dipper.
The birds that put him on the map
Will shortly all begin to rap
  And flop to something flipper.

PHILOSOPHY FOR FISH

Gather ye minnows while ye may,
Old time his net is plying.
The very fish that swims to-day
To-morrow may be frying.

THE PROMOTER

How wonderful, this man who knows
That men astute and wise,
Purblind to moonshine such as glows
Before us poet guys,
That even most sagacious men,
For hard-boiled judgments noted,
Will chase a star beyond their ken
(If properly promoted).

Who calls this man a grafter
Or jeers the stocks he bears?
He lifts the smoky rafters
And shows you golden stairs.
He points to mother lodes of tin,
Or rocks with silver coated,
And proves that fairy ships come in
(If stocks can once be floated).

He talks the Timbuc-Tulsa line
To where the gusher roars,
Or to the Onbeyonda mine—
(This poet never bores);

To apple groves beyond compare.
  Plantations dwarfing speech;
His mileage takes you anywhere
  That magic carpets reach.

God bless this benefactor,
  Whose poems never stale,
Who sells a birthright of romance
  For wads of common kale.
From sordid bonds relieved, you learn
  To tread the rainbow track.
He guarantees a safe return
  (That is, he sets you back).

It seems to me that poet norm,
  From Greece to Hindustan,
In time dopes out a native form
  To touch the simple man.
Our Vergils sing of golden gleams
  In ads that ever please;
Each Yankee Milton ever dreams
  Prospectuses like these.

THE COMPLETE CYNIC

Diogenes, that wise old bird,
  Walked Main Street up and down,
To lamp, as doubtless you have heard,
  Some honest man in town.

And whether he found any
  Has been completely hid,
But as against a penny
  I'll bet my wad he did.

He took their names and numbers down,
  With many secret snickers.
Diogenes sold sucker lists
  To Hellenistic slickers.

LOVE SONG

In the Freudian manner

Great Freud, inform my burning heart;
  Instruct me how to woo!
Teach me, with psychopathic art,
  To make my dreams come true.

He comes! Dear Love, repressions fade.
  Gone is my late neurosis;
My tongue has found, by Sigmund's aid,
  The eloquent verbosis.

Love, lay thy phobias to rest,
  Inhibit my taboo!
We twain shall share, forever blest,
  A complex built for two.

THE CLASSICS IN A NUTSHELL

Modern Reader's Library
VERGIL'S AENEID

Aeneas, with his little boy,
Slid down the fire escape from Troy.
He took the household bric-à-brac,
He took his father pick-a-back.
His wife Creusa he forgot
(Although he loved her quite a lot).
She perished in the fire, poor dame!
He often thought of his old flame.

From Troy he sailed the raging tide, O!
To Carthage, where he fell for Dido;
Then left her cold and went to hell,
Came through, and married very well.
No one had ever thought him bad,—
He was so sweet to his old dad.

WARM BABIES

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego,
Walked in the furnace to an' fro,
Hay foot, straw foot, fro an' to,
An' the flame an' the smoke flared up the flue.
Nebuchadnezzar he listen some,
An' he hear 'em talk, an' he say, "How come?"
An' he hear 'em walk, an' he say, "How so?
Dem babes was hawg tied an hour ago!"

Then Shadrach call, in an uppity way,
"A little more heat, or we ain't gwine stay!"
An' Shadrach bawl, so dat furnace shake:
"Lanlawd, heat! fo' de good Lawd's sake!"
Abednego yell, wid a loud "Kerchoo!"
"Is you out to freeze us, y' great big Jew!"
Nebuchadnezzar, he rare an' ramp,
An' call to his janitor, "You big black scamp!
Shake dem clinkers an' spend dat coal!
I'll bake dem birds, ef I goes in de hole!"

So he puts on the draf, an' he shuts de door
So de furnace glow, an' de chimbly roar.
Ol' Nebuchadnezzar, he smole a smile.
"Guess dat'll hold 'em," says he, "one while."
Then Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
Walk on de hot coals to an' fro,
Gulp dem cinders like chicken meat
An' holler out fo' a mite mo' heat.
Ol' Nebuchadnezzar gives up de fight;
He open dat door an' he bow perlite.
He shade his eyes from the glare infernal
An' says to Abednego, "Step out, Colonel."
An' he add, "Massa Shadrach, I hopes you all
Won' be huffy at me at all."

Then Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego,
Hay foot, straw foot, three in a row,
Stepped right smart from dat oven door,
Jes' as good as they wuz before,

An' far as Nebuchadnezzar could find,
Jes' as good as they was behind.

TROUBADOURS ALL

Carl Sandburg gets 'em near and far,
With the guitar, the gay guitar!
Alf Kreymborg cuts his stuff to suit
The mandolute, the mandolute!
What peddles Vachel Lindsay's dope?
The calliope, the calliope!

We can not cut our stuff to suit
The gay guitar or mandolute.
Our instrument is quite absurd,
We play upon the word, the word!
We have no parlor trick but one,
We harp upon the pun, the pun!

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Peter was a fisher-boy
  Helping with the haul;
Pilate was a shavetail
  Leading troops in Gaul.
Judas was as innocent
  As little child can be;
The wood that made the crucifix
  Was still a growing tree;

Unminted still the silver
That made the traitor's pay,
And none had yet commercialized
The spirit of the day.

THE LIBERATORS

Among our literary scenes,
Saddest this sight to me,
The graves of little magazines
That died to make verse free.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE EVE OF A NATIONAL ELECTION

Whither the trend has been trending,
Which way the tide was to turn,
Whom was the undertow towing,
Friends, we shall presently learn.

All things at last have an ending,
Soon the landslide will have slid,
Whither the silent vote's going
Cannot much longer be hid.

Soon they will shut off the spouters,
Can all the old stuff again;
The ins will be in till the outers
Can-open another campaign.

ON THE AMOUNT OF EATING IN THE NOVELS OF EDNA FERBER

For tasty food in toothsome diction
Order Edna Ferber's gefullte fiction.

THE NEW PETAGOGY

"The real purpose of the Chicago zoo," *says Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick*, "is to study the psychology of wild animals."

When Noah started his well-known ark,
He never thought of a test or mark;
He issued a co-educational call
And made it an animal free-for-all;
So long as they trooped in two by two,
He never asked what the poor fools knew.

And that's the reason, we dare to say,
That makes dumb animals dumb to-day;
Old fogey Noah, with his bum steers,
Set back petagogy ten thousand years;
And made the conditions we'll rectify
In the psychological zoo of Chi.

The animals will enter one by one,
As soon as their intelligence tests are done,
Their standings posted on graded lists,
By eminent local psychologists,
And each assigned to his proper cage
By the personnel director we'll engage.

The monk and the elephant think they're smart,
But our pet director will have a heart;
He'll make the petagogues set some store on
The poor old jackass, that worthy moron,
And map out courses they're fit to do
For him and the laughing hyena, too.

The dumbest beastie will have his chance;
His bent to cultivate and enhance.
The beaver will enter our building courses,
The mole to mining will turn his forces;
In dormitories quite up to date
Our bears will do nothing but hibernate.

Even the polecat, that roguish elf,
Shall feel quite free to express himself.
We'll count on the monkey's campus capers
To get us publicity in the papers,
And keep our name in the public eye,
The psychological zoo of Chi!

THE ALIENIST

The alienist is not a joke;
He finds you cracked and leaves you broke.

ON A FLORID RHETORICIAN

There was a luxuriant orator,
Who nobody thought could be torrider,
But he bought him a lot
In a tropical spot,
And his speeches got Florida and Florida.

ODE TO A DANDELION

Thou little sun upon our lawn,
Men hold thee doubly dear,
Knowing that when thy day is gone,
As moonshine thou'lt appear!

THE WORK OF A LIFETIME

See H. L. Mencken on "Comstockery"

When I was a lad on the Baltimore Sun,
The books that I got to lambaste,
Day in and day out in the regular run,
Were almost incredibly chaste;
You cannot imagine how horribly pure,
How heinously, hopelessly clean,
Was the chronic condition I set out to cure
In the so-called American scene.

It seemed beyond hope—I was only a boy—
The Comstocks were many and strong,
And though I ran wild with a Berserker joy,
The battle was bitter and long.
Through thick and through thin, I and Elinor Glyn
Wrote on amid setbacks and checks;
(We're not speaking now, but the old gal has been
A power in the battle for sex).

The tide turned at last, came allies thick and fast
Came Drieser, came Cabell, and Hecht;
Each season more faint is the Puritan taint
In the pishposh I get to inspect.

Came help from abroad, Dr. Freud like a god
From a fearfully modern machine.
And in lifting the bar we owe much to Bernarr
Macfadden for hints on hygiene.

Now glory to me and, in lesser degree,
To others, the sex struggle's won,
The fight I began, to make fiction more free,
As a lad on the Baltimore Sun.
Now lewder each day, in a wonderful way,
Are the truths that we're licensed to tell;
What we whispered of old, I am thankful to say
To-day we are privileged to yell.

TESTIMONIAL

"Send for it (the Encyclopedia of Etiquette) that you may know just what to do and say when you overturn a cup of coffee on your hostess' table linen. Send for it that you may know the proper way to remove fruit stones from your mouth."—*Adv.*

It used to rather get my goat,
In fact, I felt a perfect pup,
When I had wrecked the gravy boat
Or overturned my coffee cup.
But "Etiquette" is mine to-day,
And, like a gentleman of class,
I am most jocular, most gay,
When I have dumped my demi-tasse.

My fingers used to be all thumbs,
I blushed and inwardly I groaned
When served with olives, prunes, or plums,
Or cherries negligently stoned.
But now, with "Etiquette" to groom
Me, such is my temerity,
I flip the pits around the room
With debonair dexterity.

AN AWFUL RESPONSIBILITY

I am the captain of my soul;
I rule it with stern joy;
And yet I think I had more fun,
When I was cabin boy.

SNAPSHOOTING GRANDMA

Her neck is low, and her skirts are high:
She looks the camera in the eye
And chuckles: "When youth can be bought so cheap,
Might as well be shot for a lamb as a sheep."

ELF CHILD

Impressions of a reading by America's greatest woman poet

One knows her for a woman of a wise and bitter tongue,
But "Charming child!" the ladies cooed and loved her as she sung,
Of a cunning little Sorrow and a clever little Sin,
In verse as neat and pointed as a nice new pin.

REMEMBER ALMA MATER

There was an old woman who lived in a U.,
She had so many children she didn't know what to do;
So she started a drive on her darling alums
And canvassed 'em all for considerable sums.

SARGASSO SONG

We have heard a call, we've an ache and all,
  And nothing on land can cure us,
To drift and haul with a deep sea trawl
  In the wake of the ship Arcturus,
In the deep demesne of the octopus green
  And the red marine cucumber,
In the shadowy scene where the pale prawns preen,
  And the sunken pirates slumber.

INTEGER VITAE

The man who leads a single life
  Is safe most anywhere;
In Greenwich or Bohemia
  No armor need he wear.

But I'd not bet a bum sesterce
  On his life did I know he,
While singing songs to Lalage,
  Was paying bills for Chloe.

THE SIMPLE LIFE

HORACE, ODES I. 38.

Persicos odi puer apparatus

I do not share the common craze
For food with jazzy singers;
Boy, tell me not of cabarets,
Where the late loophound lingers.

A glass of home brew cool and clear
Wets down my home-cooked victuals;
So long as I can have my beer,
I'll gladly miss the skittles.

PUPPY LOVE

Catullus to Lesbia

Let us live and love to-day!
Time and fate are fickle,
And for what sour elders say,
Here's a battered nickel!

Here's a shiny dime for age,
That counts the cost of kisses,
And would spite with jealous rage
What perforce it misses.

Gossip is a surly dog
That has seen its day.
Lesbia, let's "Set Rome Agog,"
As the papers say.

THE WINES OF FRANCE

"The Wines of France," *by H. Warner Allen.*

The wines of France! The wines of France!
That vivid Villon sipped and sung,
That gave the lure to lady's glance
And loosened royal lover's tongue!
Eternal summer warms them yet.
Alas, for us their sun is set.

The Burgundy and Bordeaux wine
That made Molière and Voltaire gay.
Across our seagirt Volstead line
"They shall not pass!" stern Solons say.
What wonder Pegasus is sick?
The winged horse has lost his kick!

The wines of France! The wines of France!
The wines of Marne, Moselle, and Seine,
The sacred catacombs of Reims,
The storied hillsides of Champagne!
Lafite, Cote d'Or. Château Yquem. . . .
Torment me not with talk of them!

Fill high the bowl with coffee weak,
We must not think of themes like these!
'Twas wine gave Cyrano his beak . . .
Boy, bring me an egg chocolate, please!
Wine gave Rabelais his ruffian wit:
Boy, bring me a banana split!

THE TRUTH AT LAST

See "Brigham Young," *by H. C. Werner*

The prophet's wives lived in Bee-Hives
  Upon their best behavior;
They looked on Brigham as their lord
  And spiritual savior;
They worked to earn their bed and board;
  Their life was not so funny,
As claimed by Twain and Artemus Ward,
  Men puerile and punny.

No common bed for them was spread,
  As humorists have stated;
Each had a pillow for her head,
  Her couch was segregated.
The younger Youngs did not raise Ned;
  However Brigham twinned,
This to his credit can be said,
  His kids were disciplined.

He kept contentment in the house,
  With here a hat and there a shawl;
His wives believed that half a spouse
  Was better than no spouse at all;
He did not revel nor carouse,
  Nor use divorce or bigamy,
But lived as smug as a church mouse,
  A pillar of polygamy.

TO FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

Memor actae non alio rege pueritiae

When we were little boys and girls,
  Yours was the too persuasive pen
That set the crown of golden curls
  On Alcott's sturdy little men.

The golden curls, the velvet pants,
  The silken sash with pride displayed
By mothers sold on your romance—
  Ah, God! The price we fellows paid!

Many the manly heart that broke,
  Many the boyish life embittered!
The taunting words the tough guys spoke,
  The teasing way the girlies tittered.

That crown of curls than thorns more sharp—
  Alas, you knew not what you wrote!
We do not call it back to carp;
  Long since it ceased to get our goat.

Of story-ladies first and best,
  In heaven now you talk to crowds
Of cherubim forever blest,
  Squatting on little golden clouds.

Of Sara Crewe and Fauntleroy
  You tell them with that tireless tongue,
They listen with seraphic joy,
  The little good boys that died young.

What of the Fauntleroys that fell?
May they not mar your placid joys!
The Cedrics that went straight to Hell
To prove they were not mamma's boys!

PART II: PROSE

POT SHOTS FROM PEGASUS

PART II

We hope that our readers will believe in the absolute sincerity of our pleasure in getting back to work for them. As the old Mormon said when asked about the expense of maintaining five separate establishments: "It's a pleasure to work for those we love."

It is a little late in the season and perhaps in the century for the information to do our readers much good. But we find from our continued reading of Capt. Marryat that there is no cure for sunburn so good as to bathe the affected parts in brandy and water.

"Loud Speaker Leads Church in Prayer."—Headline.
The modern deus ex machina.

A club of lady poisoners has just been discovered in Belgrade, Serbia. This is, perhaps, the Balkan equivalent of our sewing circles.

The first radio church has been voted a success by its board of directors. This is not the first business successfully operated through receivers. But we still do not understand how the problem of passing the plate has been solved.

London is at a loss to explain the conduct of Sir Gerald Wilshire, Bart., who invited his manicurist for a ride, tied her to a tree, and coated her with black shoe polish. It's obvious to any American that he took a shine to her.

A Fifth Avenue dealer in prints has been arrested as bootlegger to New York society. We wondered where all the lovely labels on the liquor bottles came from.

Ads for a "Tudor sleeping-room set" offer "beds full or twin size." We suggest that the full Tudor bed should be called Henry VIII.

Americans have been asked to set aside March 19 as national Bryan day. It seems to us that our holidays would classify rather neatly as bank holidays and bunk holidays.

"A new hat has the same effect upon a woman that three cocktails have upon a man."—Jay E. House.

He means it goes to her head.

Our own variant: postwar poetry is tranquillity remembered in commotion.

"Matrimony brought me to a park bench," writes "Hobo" to an advice to the lovelorn department. This is a sad case, but exceptional. Park benches bring more men to matrimony than matrimony to park benches.

The cheapest form of aviation is motorless gliding, in which the Germans are doing good pioneer work. But we look for the Scotch to carry it to its final perfection.

What has become of the conscientious election crook who went to all the trouble of stuffing the election boxes?

A theatre is to be built in Echo Canyon, Arizona, the acoustics of which are said to be so perfect that an ordinary

conversational whisper will carry to all parts of the house. This should be a veritable paradise for movie caption readers.

The successful salesman doesn't do all the talking, says a professor of advertising, but knows when to give the prospect a chance. This idea of giving the prospect a run for his money is novel, but there seems to be sense in it. A good angler doesn't work too hard at first. He gives the fish line till it is tired and then reels it in gradually.

One of the most interesting developments in modern journalism is the spread of the column idea in trade journals and house organs. Hardly a paper or magazine of this type is without its humorous "colyum"; for example, in a well known breakfast food organ the column called "From Pillow to Postum"; in a western state medical journal, "A Line O' Typhus or Two"; in a leading undertakers' magazine, "The News of the Wake"; in a piano manufacturers' house organ, "The Tuning Tower"; in a poultrymen's journal, "Lays and Cackles"; in a dairymen's gazette, "On the Udder Hand"; in a large electric light and gas company organ, "Public Futilities"; in a radio magazine, "Live Wireless"; in a phone company house organ, "Wrong Numbers"; etc., etc. But we note that, as a general rule, the ingenuity of these columnists seems to have been exhausted in naming their "colyums."

The real problem of prohibition is for government chemists to find a way to denature human nature.

It is rumored from Washington that the great beauty industry of the United States will demand a cabinet representative, to be known as the secretary of the exterior.

A New Jersey man, arraigned for intoxication, claimed that a Scotchman gave him a drink. Either the drink was poor Scotch or the giver was a poor Scotchman.

A National Greek letter fraternity of members of college bands is being formed. We suggest that it be known as Beta Drum.

To celebrate "bird year" the school children of New York City have been asked to vote on their favorite bird. A close race between the oily boid and the stoic is expected.

Wonder if students of mental diseases have noticed the twist which causes editors to clip verses and paragraphs without credit. We suggest that it be christened cliptomania.

A vox popper writes urging Chicago youths to have the courage to go hatless. We would be better employed urging them to go gatless.

"Spirits Either Illusion or Fraud, Says Savant."—Headline.

Home brew is an illusion; bootleg is a fraud.

After twenty years' fighting, the simplified spelling board of America has forced into the dictionary twelve out of the 29,000 odd (very odd) words in its program. Only one of these words will be admitted into this column—the veritable inner shrine and fortalice of conservatism in this country—and that is the word "pedagog" for teacher. Simp words for simp occupations. That's our slogan.

Speaking of attraction of opposites, what about the love of the tired business man for the unattired chorus lady?

The Universal Pure Thought League of Denver petitions congress for a law to punish all flappers whose skirts are higher than the instep. This reminds us that in our short lifetime we have seen skirts rise from instep to step-in with out sensible harm to our mental purity.

The psychology class at the University of Minnesota is teaching worms and mice to turn to the right. If it succeeds in teaching traffic observance to these higher forms of life, the class hopes next to experiment on pedestrians.

Attempts on Mussolini's life have shown that he has the first essential of greatness—good luck.

Cosmeticians disagree as to whether the bob is passing. Our opinion is that the passing of the bob is like the passing of the buck. It will continue to pass but we shall never be rid of it entirely.

Our poetic confrère, F.P.A., is worried because there is no rime for tabloid. There is even less reason for it.

A story comes to us from a near-by state university that seems almost too good to be true. But we have it from a full professor (we use "full" in the most honorific sense). Our informant tells us that a liberal-minded faculty member had come to Chicago on a visit and while here was presented with several quarts of forbidden fruit juice by a convivial friend. On his way back to the university

loaded down with baggage he encountered the president, who when the train pulled into the station kindly offered to carry one of his suitcases. At that minute dry agents appeared to search all hand luggage for contraband. They did search the luggage of everyone but the president, who is bone-dry and above suspicion. Unless his eye happens to light on this paragraph the president will never know why the professor thanked him so much more effusively than the occasion seemed to require.

It was the evening of the big blizzard, and our friend the architect was deploring the fact that no one would come out to hear his lecture at the Art Institute that night.

"And what is your subject?" we asked politely.

"Small Houses," said he.

"Well, you couldn't have a better night for it," we said consolingly.

The perfect juryman, like the absolute vacuum, is a theory which cannot exist in an actual world. Consider the legal requirements for a perfect juryman. He must have an open mind which has never taken anything in.

Commander Byrd has received a new distinction—doctor of latitude and longitude. This gives him more degrees to his name than any other honorary to-day.

Dr. Henderson, head of the Mormon college in Utah, puts his O. K. on dancing, according to the *Daily News*, which is no more than we should expect of a pious Mormon. The dance was one of Brigham Young's few and simple pleasures. He staged frequent hops to his entire household and, setting an example of plural partners to monogamous

young people, conscientiously made out a card which included even the oldest and homeliest. By starting these functions at 4 p. m. and continuing till midnight, with a short intermission for supper, Brigham always managed to dance once with each of his wives and twice with Amelia.

Scandal mongers are doing all they can to raise Victorian worthies in the eyes of our young intellectuals, who now incline to believe that the mid-Victorians weren't so slow after all. What they lacked was modern publicity.

The co-ed manages a car better than does a college youth, according to insurance actuaries. The trouble is that the college youth generally has to manage a car and a co-ed at the same time.

"I am a plain, blunt man from the middle-west," says ex-Gov. Harding of Iowa, "where we poke one another in the ribs and slap one another on the back."

Chicago is proud to call herself middle-western, but fortunately the rib-poking, back-slapping type of middle-westerner begins somewhere west of Chi, possibly at the school of chiropractic at Davenport.

A local author we know has a big idea. Besides the unlimited autographed edition of his next collection he will issue a few unautographed copies which should command a high premium from collectors of rarities.

Deep-sea diving is perhaps the only profession in which it is customary to begin at the top and work down.

There is no doubt that listening to football over the radio is good fun, but it makes the average red-blooded

American's participation in sports more vicarious than ever. We used to go to games to see another fellow play for us. Now we sit at home and hear a fellow seeing another fellow playing a game for us.

Another indication that you can't fool all of the people all of the time is the marriage license bureau's report of a phenomenally light business on April Fool's day.

Youth will be served, as the saying goes. But age will be preserved, is the answer of the modern beauty parlor.

Between mail cars liable to be held up and mail planes liable to fall down the postal authorities are in a ticklish position.

Nab Three Boys in Orgy; End Mad Bandit Careers, says a headline. It appears to us that a thoroughly up-to-date fairy book would include the following:

The Three Baby Bandits.
Puss in Bootlegging.
The House that Hi-jack Built.
Jack the Cop Killer.

A Manitoba farmer has found a fossil oyster, believed to have come down from pre-glacial days. Though not yet agreed on the oyster's exact geological era, scientists assert that the right age must be one with an R in it.

Of Madame de Pompadour as portrayed in a new "life," a lady critic says: "I could like her if I could forget Boucher's painting of her."

We know just how this lady feels. It has always seemed

to us that if there's anything homelier than the old masters it's the old mistresses.

Yesterday we met an ex-Chicagoan who is visiting the city for the first time in fifteen years. He complained of the beautifying of the city and missed the picturesque old buildings and the good old stockyards smell. "Well," we admitted, "it was a distinctive feature." "Yes," he said, "you have taken the stink out of distinctive."

What is the difference between the old-fashioned cut-purse and the modern pugilist? The one cuts it and the other splits it.

Speaking philosophically, as we try to once in a while, it seems to us that the efficient machinery of publicity to-day threatens real values as never before. It tends to make of life an auction in which the prizes are knocked down not to the highest but to the loudest bidder.

A full but enjoyable holiday season is in store for the December grand jury in New York, which has been charged with the duty of investigating all alleged indecent theatrical entertainments in the city.

The idea that radio and other devices to tie humanity closer together promote international peace is one to which we cannot altogether subscribe. Consider the Kilkenny cats. The shorter their rope the harder they scratched. Improved communication makes it easier for us to misunderstand one another. That putting the human family in a single bed will guarantee close harmony is not borne out by small-scale experiments.

The most sure-fire plot in fiction, says our friend the critic, is the captured wife who locks the door on her caveman till his patience and generosity win her unwilling affections. One might make a formula out of this:

Marry in hate and relent at leisure.

"Don't let baby turn valves on gas stoves," is announced as the latest official "Don't-a-Day" for parents.

Parents who have been encouraging baby to play with the gas stove are ill-advised, it strikes us. It may keep the child quiet, but it wastes gas something awful.

Did you ever notice the difference in speed between British and American politics? British candidates stand for office; ours run for it. Over there the office has to seek the man, while here it flees before a howling mob of candidates.

The penalty for "moral turpitude" has been removed from the immigration act for persons already in the United States, which means that the privileges of citizenship henceforth will be extended to visiting aliens.

Bavaria holds the world's beer-drinking record and France is the world's champion wine-drinker, according to European dispatches. Well, anyhow, Uncle Sam holds the world's champion moonshine record, which takes a lot more guts than the wine or beer championships, if anyone should ask you.

Criticism is the adventures of the soul among masterpieces, said a distinguished amateur of criticism. But as the books come crowding up to a professional critic his soul becomes callous to masterpieces. Books are to him as legs

to the proverbial London busman. Like the physician, he sees in them only so many cases demanding treatment. To beauty in a patient he must not be susceptible lest it tempt him to unethical conduct. His business is to probe infirmities. Take the critic out of his office and send him on a vacation with a single book and he will recover a human attitude toward literature. He will enjoy a book without diagnosing it. But at his desk the best you can expect of a critic is a professional reaction. That is why the most agreeable criticism is the work of amateurs.

A questionnaire at the University of Maine shows that one-fifth of the freshman class believes Henry James to have been a bandit. By and by they will be educated seniors and know him as a bore. A sad disillusioning process, the higher education!

Press "epigrams" from Senator Couzens' speech point to the need of re-definition to cover present usage: An "epigram" is a rather long pithless statement with no particular point. Or, even more briefly, an "epigram" is a disappointed paragraph.

A Russian author has discovered a way to get double royalties by publishing the same book under different titles with two different publishers. We don't see why several of our popular authors shouldn't cash in heavily by this system. Their books all read alike, anyhow.

Our idea of a real sinecure would be the job of press-agent for Will Rogers.

Success in life, says Dr. Crane, is mostly a matter of meeting people right. We venture to disagree. Meeting peo-

ple right is something, but it is far more important to meet the right people.

Laziness is the vice of modern high school pupils and frankness is their virtue, according to eastern educators. In other words, the modern pupil doesn't even pretend he wants to study.

A philosopher is a man who reads the quack's query, "Why be bald?" and answers, "Why not?"

Long-range weather forecasting based on variations of the sun's heat is promised by a Washington scientist. With such service it will be possible to plan picnics a month or so ahead with perfect certitude—which is to us a horrible thought. If we knew for a whole month ahead that we had to go to a picnic on a certain day we doubt whether we could live to face it. There are certain things that must be done on the spur of the moment or they would never be done at all.

"Standards of beauty are nowhere the same," says a local beauty expert. "The Turk still admires the fat woman, and in Poland a nose with a slight hump is considered attractive."

Thus does Providence provide an eye for every hook and a sphere in which even the Turk is indispensable.

A tip for tourists from the lips of Thomas Jefferson: "I would not care to go to heaven if I had to go with a party." Mr. Jefferson was speaking of a political party, but doubtless he would have felt the same of the personally conducted kind.

"Tablets with crude inscriptions" have been found on the supposed site of the garden of Eden in Mesopotamia. These, no doubt, were the original tabloid papers and it will be interesting to see whether the inscriptions are any cruder than those in vogue to-day.

That the average American should regard the eighteenth amendment and the Volstead act with quite the same reverence as the original constitution is asking too much, with all respect to Senator Borah. The constitution came down to us from the fathers, solidly built, time-honored and proved by time. As for the eighteenth amendment, we made it ourselves in war time, as we did the wooden ships and cantonments. And, like the aforesaid structures, it leaks.

France reminds us of our debt to Lafayette, and Italy reminds us of our debt to Columbus, but England is considerate enough never to remind us of our debt to George III., to whom, more than to any other, we owe our national independence and greatness.

"Seek Card Party Host When Guest Loses an Eye."—Headline.

Etiquette allows a guest to lose his shirt to his host at a card party, but an eye is going too far.

Rudolph Valentino perfectly represented the American woman's ideal of a romantic lover, and it seems to us that his vast popularity is a just indictment of the American business man as a love-maker. Babbitt is a good bread winner but a poor worshiper. His lady has to fly to the screen for what she can't get in the home. Love in the home is bread pudding and applesauce. Love at the movies

is double bitter sweet and peach Melba. The cinema is the soda parlor of sentiment.

The Osage Indians have come into some more money, which reminds us of our contrib Ollam's account of a visit to Chief Baconrind of that tribe. The venerable Baconrind owned the costliest phonograph that money could buy and played Ollam record after record, every one a Galli-Curci.

"Why do you have nothing but Galli-Curci?" asked the visitor, finally somewhat surfeited with trills.

"Me getting old and deaf," replied the Osage sage. "Me like this gal Coochy, she yell so damn loud!"

Forty thousand germs are said to be transferred with each good-night kiss. The scientifically educated flapper, when her sweetie asks for a good-night kiss, will reply, "Don't bacilli!"

The annual drive against "Xmas" is on again, and we heartily agree with those who oppose this abbreviation. "Xmas" is journalese in the worst sense, a sort of "X marks scene of the crucifixion."

Dry agents in soup and fish require a special appropriation of $500,000. It costs money to put the gent into agent.

Falling into poison ivy during a "dress" rehearsal, Paul Popolous and his classic dancers had to cancel all engagements. "Dress" rehearsal, we take is a misnomer in this case. Reasoning, both a priori and a posteriori, points to the fact that it was an undress rehearsal.

Dithyrambic dancing has a tough toe to tread here. Our booze was too much for Isadora Duncan and our bushes for M. Popolous. What with the cup of moonshine and

the wreath of poison ivy we provide, poor old Dionysus finds America too hot to hold him.

In ten years, says George Wharton Pepper, all opposition to prohibition will have faded. It sounds to us as if somebody had been stuffing Senator Pepper.

In a world often careless of its artists and writing men we are glad to say that Chicago looks out for its own. On the south side birthplace of Henry J. Smith, author of *Deadlines*, a brass plate has been set up with the simple and tasteful inscription "Steam Laundry."

Because the citizens of Mr. Wells' Utopia wear no clothes, reviewers charge him with forgetting to take account of climate and weather. It should go without saying that in a Utopia there would be no weather or, if any, always fair and warmer. The next question, what the poets and paragraphers would find to talk about without weather, also answers itself. In a Utopia there would be no poets or paragraphers. If you go on to ask us whatinell there would be in a Utopia, we are prepared there also. We don't know any more than Mr. Wells does. The only thing we feel sure of is that there would be nothing in it for us.

This year's ultra in bathing suits will not be ne plus but knee minus.

We fight shy of football in this column for an odd reason, perhaps; viz: Because we know so much about it. With our head crammed with old scores, famous victories and bitter defeats—all the ancient history of football—there is no subject that would so tempt us to reminisce. You know

the sort of thing. We saw the grand stand fall at Stagg field killing a lad and distracting atention for a moment from Maddox's touchdown off Wisconsin's tackle. We even remember when and how Northwestern beat Chicago two years in succession. Reading of a smart gain through center by a contemporary fullback we are tempted to wag our wise old bean and say a little poetically:

On such a play did Hugo Bezdek bust
The Yostian line and, wild with battle lust,
The bleachers rose and gave three rousing cheers
That still re-echo in our deaf old ears.

Yes, we could reminisce with the best, but a column a day of reminisces might keep the reader away, we fear. Let our readers be informed that the things we know best are the things we say least about and vice versa. There is nothing so humorous as ignorance and it is our job to attempt a humorous column.

Cato and Clemenceau, "Carthage must be destroyed," and "France must be rebuilt." We know of few better historical analogues than these two famous oldsters and their slogans, which come to much the same thing when you consider where French building materials must come from.

Has it occurred to anyone that along with a lot of other less laudable functions the Ku Klux serves as the 5 and 10 cent store of Masonry?

Col. House's private papers, which he has promised to Yale University, will be placed in a vault, "access to which for a number of years will be granted only to specially qualified students." In view of Col. House's proved

discretion we infer that these students must be at the very least deaf, dumb and blind.

A huge fortune awaits the man who invents some method of heckling radio speakers.

Credits for golf courses are now being granted at Pomona College, California. Cynics on modern education will reflect that this, after all, only amounts to putting the putt into puttering.

Pictures of undraped Greek divinities in school reference books are too shocking for modern children, according to a school superintendent.

We suggest that the classical dictionaries be revised to show Aphrodite in the role of Miss Greece posing on the boardwalk at Chidos in a one-piece bathing suit.

The secret of political success lies in avoiding major issues. Your political genius is the man who can most successfully make mountains out of molehills and then climb them with the greatest éclat.

Suspicions of wholesale frauds in local registration are rather a puzzle to us. We served for several years as clerk of election in a First Ward precinct, during which time everything was done honestly and in order. Hinky Dink and Bath-house John always dropped in at the polling place election mornings, passing cigars to us gents, candy to the ladies and the time of day to both, but no bribery or corruption was ever attempted. We particularly remember Ald. Coughlin's telling our mother, who was a judge of elections, his mother's recipe for making doughnuts.

"Why, he seems a very nice man!" our mother said to us afterward.

After carefully weighing the pros and cons in the matter, the Paris *Temps* has decided that the discovery of America was harmful to the human race. The hindsight of the French on this point is not so remarkable as the foresight of the Norsemen who saw America first and decided to keep it dark.

We don't really see how the discovery of America can be discussed apart from American discoveries. Have telephones, airplanes, wooden nutmegs, professional baseball, phonographs, movies, machine guns, peruna, flivvers, flappers, chewing gum and white mule been harmful or helpful to the human race? These are the real questions to be faced in any serious inquiry into the value of Columbus' find.

As a matter of fact, serious discussion of this topic gets nowhere. There have been some excellent witticisms produced on it by Oscar Wilde and others, of which the best, on the whole, seems a remark of Philip Guedella in commenting on the historical truism that barbarian invasions have always come from the east. "Barbarians have always come from the east," says Philip, "because, until the discovery of America, there was no other place for them to come from."

We decided the other day that we should like to know how it felt to be John D. Rockefeller. So we ate a $2 lunch and gave the waiter a shiny new dime at the end of it. But something about the way he took it made us feel that it isn't what you give but what you have that makes you feel like John D. Rockefeller.

What do you suppose the ancient Greeks with their well-known flair for logical rewards and penalties, would have done with the problem of the drunken speeder? Our idea is that they would have sentenced him to drink his gasoline and burn his hooch and have his substance devoured eternally by six garage men in the meanest section of the classical Hades.

The House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church has decided in favor of omitting the word "obey" from the marriage ceremony. Husbands who married under the old rules, of course, will be delighted to hear that the decision has not been made retroactive.

The classical Hades will survive as long as poets sing of ladies, for which Hades is the only rhyme. You can't praise ladies without Hades any more than you can raise Hades without ladies.

So Henry Ford is said to have passed John D. Rockefeller in the race for the world's biggest fortune! But he did it on John's gas. Don't forget that.

King Alfonso is reported as piqued because a young American girl at Deauville asked him to "wait a minute." Knowing what "wait a minute" really means, we cannot blame his majesty.

One thing we rather expect to see result from campaign oratory by radio is the complete disappearance of the gesture. To be sure, there isn't much left of it even now. The days when fluent speech was wedded to fluid motion are far gone. But with an invisible audience oratory will lose even its vestigial remnants of Demosthenic and Ciceronian

calisthenics. What use to spurn with indignant arm, to spit with withering contempt or to pound home a point with emphatic fist, for an audience a thousand miles away from the center of the disturbance?

The growing lack of interest in tag days on the part of the masculine citizenry seems to show that, if the institution is to flourish as it has, something must be done to give it a sporting interest. Why not adopt the good old game of cross tag? Let it be the rule that if another male intervenes between the tag dame and her target she must turn and pursue the interloper. In this way the loop would soon be filled with merry groups of business men dodging in and out around each tagger. Appeal to the play instinct, arouse competitive interest, and four or five tag days a week will not be too many.

"More poets are born than insurance agents," says Witter Bynner. One wonders how Witter draws the line. The principal requirement of a good poet and a good insurance agent is the same, to talk prettily about death.

Yale alumni make more fuss over the presence here of their basketball team than the old boys of Princeton or Harvard would if their football teams, baseball teams and glee clubs were showing simultaneously. Not that other collegiate alumni lack spirit, but they ripen, mellow, and acquire perspective. Yale men are the Peter Pans of the college world; they never grow up. Age cannot wither nor custom stale the ever-green juvenility of your true-blue Yale man.

A quarrel between two Auburn Park brothers over ownership of a package of cigarettes led to the shooting of one

of them. Although most men will agree that it is high time for individual ownership of cigarettes to be recognized, it seems regrettable that shooting should be necessary.

The political career in present-day Washington might be epitomized in the words, "From Influence to Affluence."

A friend is surprised that although we have done considerable broadcasting we own no radio set.

He need not be. Radio is final proof of the rule that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

"It's going to be a great blue-bottle night," said our neighborhood druggist New Year's eve, explaining, when we admitted mystification, that he meant effervescent salts would be in big demand. We often wonder how much of this sort of trade-English there is floating around and whether anybody is collecting it.

What a subtle difference there is between being let in on a deal and being taken in on one!

There is rice powder, there is roach powder and there is talcum for men advertised as "a he-powder great for after shaving and bathing."

The "practice flat" of the Domestic School of Arts and Science which is preparing June brides to serve $0.16 meals has a "practice bride" and a "practice maid" and "practice provisions"—everything, in short, but a "practicing groom."

A temple to Adonis, whose cult was closely related to that of Aphrodite, has been unearthed by Syrian Boy

Scouts near Beirut. One can only hope they found nothing improper. Pagan archaeology, we submit, is no place for a Boy Scout. Much better have the little Beiruters take their pails and shovels and root around in the sea sands, leaving the rough stuff to the professors, as heretofore.

Odd, isn't it, how nothing seems to bring out the old Adam like New Year's eve?

No doubt the board of education has satisfactory grounds for reinstating the teacher suspended for sex talks. But we still believe the business of our school teachers is to teach the young folks something they don't know.

There are two common sights which remind us the one of the other and which may be classed together as "officious futilities." The one is a barber sedulously applying comb and brush to his bald-headed customer. The other is a book reviewer—almost any book reviewer—solemnly applying the instruments of serious criticism to a notorious pot-boiler.

The use of "human" as a noun for "human being" is classed in Webster's international as "now chiefly humorous." And yet if you are a noticing reader you will find that the funny columns, conducted mostly by old fogies with a weakness for the proprieties of speech, are about the only places where this vulgarism does not reign supreme.

New York has now a $400,000 club for exclusive chauffeurs known as the Society of Professional Automotive Engineers. The Footmen's club that Thackeray wrote about

was also mighty exclusive, but nomenclature had not developed then as it has now. Otherwise the Footmen's Club no doubt would have come down to us the Society of Stationary Pedal Engineers.

Starting perhaps with Prof. Robinson's call for creative thinking, a run seems to have started on the word "creative." Not to mention the "creative writers" and "creative critics," the latest is a book on "Creative Selling." Like "service" and "psychology," "creative" will probably have to run its course through all the trades. When it comes to "creative undertaking" the limit will have been reached and some new catchword will be started on the rounds.

Improving on the lists of ten books one would choose if obliged to live on a desert island, one of Don Marquis' contribs has picked a list of ten men whom he would like as fellow castaways. The list is interesting but open to criticism, we think, in that it contains the names of two well-known columnists. A columnist is himself a colorless individual, entertaining only through what he picks up from his companions and his surroundings. If few cities can support more than one voracious columnist what would become of two on one small desert island? Cast on a desert island with only eight possible contributors, two columnists would soon exhaust themselves and devour their companions. The only bright spot for them would be the goats which, as everybody knows, are numerous on all well-appointed desert islands. A goat is a great asset to a columnist, but even so one must have something to feed the brute.

We have amused ourselves preparing a list of ten perfect companions for a desert island, but we are not going to make it public. Suffice it to say that it contains very few well-known men, in fact, very few men at all.

"The perfect hat," says the companionable girl to our contrib Rusty, "is a wee bit devilish."

We'll trust the companionable girl to get it exactly right. But everybody has seen the lady who asked her milliner for something a wee bit devilish and got something that looked like hell.

Pearl owners are reported in panic over the report that experts cannot distinguish natural pearls from the Japanese cultivated article. The only solution seems to be pedigreed pearls. Jewelers should be able to trace the parentage of each pearl, proving that it was the product of a wild oyster in a state of natural irritation.

There are advantages and disadvantages to the proposal for dividing the year into thirteen months now being pushed by business men and public accountants. Months with five pay days will be no more. On the other hand, it may be easier to work the boss for a whole month's vacation.

A point that future historians will ponder is the unique importance of Mr. Ziegfeld's choruses in the life of present-day America. Each member of a Follies chorus has an ex-officio news value ten times that of an ordinary senator. Whether wooed or wedded, match-making or match-breaking, she is good for first or second page publicity. In all history no body of young women has claimed such importance in the life of a state—unless it be the College of Vestal Virgins in Rome, and even this analogy seems not entirely satisfactory.

The art of good conversation is dead, writes a contemporary, misunderstanding, we think, what has actually hap-

pened. Most writing to-day is good conversation. What used to be considered good talk is no longer found except in print and what used to be considered good writing is gone altogether.

The most helpful linguistic accomplishment for Americans traveling in foreign parts is to be able to make a noise like a million dollars.

The ineptitude of proverbs is a subject of which too little has been written. Consider, for instance, the saying, "drunk as a lord." Anyone with the slightest experience of inebriates knows that "lordly as a drunk" would mean twice as much.

A Detroit busman who forgot to warn his top load of a low bridge has been arrested on a charge of knocking down fares.

Our distaste for the "contented group" of poets led by Edgar Guest is simple and maybe reasonable. We love the milk of human kindness, but we can't abide it canned.

The peculiarity of infant nations is that they learn to talk long before they can walk or even stand on their own legs.

One serious cause of illiteracy in the United States is the demand for child labor outside the schools. Another is the objection to child labor inside the schools which up-to-date pedagogy is urging. Our system of education works if the students will.

Almost we are persuaded to believe in spiritualism by "Prof." Keeler's spook message, "Barnum and his friend are both here today." What could be easier to believe than that the illustrious dead continue their main interest in life and that whenever two or three suckers are gathered together in a seance Barnum is in the midst of them?

A blind reporter leads all others in "copy" accepted at the Northwestern school of journalism, confirming our pet thesis that the ear is more important than the eye in reporting. Hearsay, you see, is always more romantic than actual observation. A noted critic has said that the essential of a great reporter is "the innocence of the eye." The eye simply cannot be as innocent as the ear. There is something inherently mean and suspicious about the human optic. Great reporters, from Herodotus down, have had the innocence of ear, disturbed as little as possible by the skeptical orb of vision.

What we call daylight saving time is called just summer time in England. The emphasis on thrift in our expression is highly characteristic. Americans have the time-saving idea more than any other people that ever lived. We will spend any amount of money to save time. Figured in dollars, the number of minutes saved in one year in the United States by extra-fare trains, taxis, telegrams, long-distance telephones, special delivery and air-mail stamps would pay the national debt twice over. And what do we do with all the time we save? Ah, that is the question. Europe, on the other hand, is still a spendthrift with time and miser with money. That, perhaps, is why she cannot understand our unseemly haste in the matter of payment of war debts.

The average man's stock of words is painfully small and flabby, thinks John Gunther. Do a daily dozen with Webster and enlarge your vocabulary, is his slogan, and there is a good deal to be said for it—all of which John has said or will say.

Far be it from us to underrate the advantage of a vocabulary. Only a word or two of caution may be timely. A man's vocabulary may be small, but if it suffices for his ideas it is large enough. Given the ideas, a man will probably scurry around and find the words for them, but a stock of words is no guaranty of ideas. Dictionary exercise, like any other calisthenics, needs expert direction. Overdevelopment of the vocabulary with underdevelopment of ideas is a fearful thing, of which examples are legion.

We have always wished—though in a columnist our ambition is hopeless—that we might be called "a man of few words" rather than be credited with "a wonderful vocabulary." Judging by the persons to whom one hears the latter phrase applied it is a compliment to think twice over. However, we are all in favor of dictionary exercise within reason. If you sit down to your Webster with appetite and get up from it still hungry you are probably not overdoing the thing, and even if you should, you can be straightened out by the series of vocabulary-reducing exercises with which we intend to follow up John's articles.

In our opinion the job of the king of Spain and that of the king of Italy were never so safe before as they are today. Their position under the dictators becomes a sort of social secretaryship. An executive relieved of silly social distractions, seconded by an *arbiter elegantiae* removed from political temptations, comes pretty close to being the ideal form of government.

If we were footloose and well heeled, globe trotting would be the first sport we should tackle. But we doubt whether we should go in to beat any professional records. We should probably trot a trial heat around the old planet just to see what we could do. After that we should drift back to some of the nice places we had seen on our trial spin and sit around in front of cafés on the rues, boulevards and strasses drinking soft drinks to remind us of home.

Fish, according to a leading scientist, are practically color blind, but until anglers are the same, trout flies will continue to be tied in attractive colors.

An early rising record for Washington is said to have been set by Representative Nicholas Longworth, who arrived at one of Cal's "flapjack breakfasts" before the batter was up.

There is a time for everything. If you could live with the most eloquent after-dinner speaker you would probably find that his before-breakfast vocabulary was very small and ornery.

We should call a hobby party an original kind of entertainment. The guests, we are informed, are told to come wearing their pet hobbies. Thus the stamp collector comes plastered with postage stamps; the physical director wears a necklace of Indian clubs, etc., etc. The humorist, of course, comes wearing a smile.

The fellowship between the pedestrian and the horse was emphasized for us yesterday when we jaywalked across the

street under cover of a one-horse truck which was holding up a swarm of infuriated taxis. There should be close co-operation between these two vanishing species.

Every disease, says Dr. George Foden, radio-therapist, has its own wave-length. Especially sea-sickness.

Is there any lure like the lure of free tickets? This, we dare say, has drawn more young men and women into journalism than any other single cause.

As we are fond of remarking, there was something about horse trading that sharpened wits if it did not breed them. The plugs brought out the sparks. In contrast to this, the automobile makes bores out of Beerbohms, filling our drawing rooms with a dullness of conversation that until this age was unimagined. The only contribution of the horseless carriage to humor has been the multifarious story of flivvers. Though somewhat mechanical, these jokes are at times funny. But every one of them smacks of snobbery. No one has laughed or can laugh at Lizzie or Henry except from an instinct of snobbery, and this, we submit, is a low foundation for a national school of humor—especially in the world's greatest democracy.

There is surprise as well as pathos in the news that a movie comedian has been fatally injured by ostriches. We have seen movie comedians manhandled by everything but ostriches and come through safely. But no created being is so strong that there does not live a stronger. The ostrich, perhaps, is nature's answer to the movie comedian.

Candy is said to be replacing wine in the affections of epicures. The bon-vivant of yesterday is the bonbon-vivant of today.

Lurid plays are debauching Chicago morals, according to a local minister. A succession of them during the last year "called out no protest from the rank and file of our people."

Possibly the reason the rank and file didn't protest was because they didn't see the plays. It is our impression that only the very bad and the very good attend lurid plays.

Missouri farmers have figured it out that a dozen eggs will buy two and one-half bushels of corn. Now, if it can be demonstrated that one bushel of corn will produce two dozen eggs, the road to fortune is wide open.

In a congressional row the voter's sympathies are always with the underhog.

Progress is still resolutely ignored in certain quarters. The comic strip artists, for instance, have never recognized the glass rolling pin that has almost displaced the old fashioned wooden variety.

The silver three-penny piece, England's favorite collection-plate coin, may be withdrawn in favor of a larger coin, reports London. Mass meetings have already been held in Edinburgh and Glasgow and resolutions adopted declaring this a dastardly blow at religion.

The next thing for the scientists to do is to perfect an amplifier for the still, small voice. That would be a real step toward the scientific millennium.

One of the most abused words in the popular mind today is the word "cynicism." As commonly understood it seems to stand for a sour flippancy. Nothing could be

further from the truth. A real cynic is a kindly man, a tolerant man, a man who does not expect more of his fellow men than he finds within himself.

We are tremendously concerned over the reports we see in the papers about the bad effect of cigarettes on the brain. Our problem is to determine whether we are suffering from brain fag or fag brain.

Two more movie stars have been granted interlocutory degrees of divorce. Whatever can the courts be thinking of to keep peddling these dangerous weapons? A picture person with an interlocutory decree is like a child with a loaded revolver.

Lord Curzon has willed two historic ruins to the British nation. What will Britain do with them? The only precedent we recall is that of Lord Nelson, who willed Emma Hamilton to the English people, and in this case England shamefully ignored the sacred relic.

In America the man who votes twice is called a repeater. In Ireland he is a "personator," a dignified word, implying artistic talent and preparation. Between repeating and impersonation there is the difference that exists between an art and a trade.

It strikes us as wise as well as tactful for Harold to let Ganna go on with her music. A fourth husband could hardly object to playing second fiddle.

Henry Ford's tax would have run the whole United States government in 1830, computes the alert statistician. But in 1830 Henry would have been the village blacksmith.

You know the formula for anti-Volstead humor? Light whines and sneers, of course.

Viewing merely the political workings of a democracy, we have sometimes been tempted to define democracy as an institution in which the whole is equal to the scum of all its parts.

Jokes about Scotch humor have more truth in them than most national libels. We know because we have a lot of Scotch in us (Scotch ancestry, we mean). From scratching for a living on the niggardly soil of Scotland our ancestors came and settled in Barre, Vt., where you can't scratch far without striking granite. If there is anything tighter than a native Scotchman, it is a Scotch Yankee. Our people came west in the '50's. Three generations on the lavish soil of Illinois have loosened up our Scotch stock a little. We are Americanized to the point where we can give until it hurts. But it hurts us a little sooner than it does most people.

The Russian government, which honored the late poet Essenine by promising pensions to any children he might die possessed of, finds itself considerably embarrassed. Most of the anonymous children in Russia are now being ascribed to this facile poet. Prospects are that his collected works will fill several large orphan asylums.

Wonder what the old fashioned worthy whose life was an open book would think of the modern notable whose life is a front page story?

"I'd do it all over again," says Peggy Hopkins Joyce when questioned about her numerous marriages. And the worst of it is, she probably will.

J. Pierpont Morgan has taken Col. Lindbergh to lunch with a group of financiers. That's taking a flyer in Wall Street.

Among quaint survivals one may mention the old-fashioned suicide who turns on the gas instead of stepping on it.

"Divorce with me has not been a matter of choice but of necessity," says a thrice-married lady of our acquaintance. "I am saving my alimony till I can afford to keep a husband."

Cornet players become bald early, reports an investigator, which is puzzling in view of the fact that no other art is so hair raising for auditors.

It cost Columbus $2,115 to discover America. Subtract that from the European debt and see how much Europe is ahead on the transaction.

A wealthy socialist is a man who wants to eat his cake and give it away, too.

A conservative criminal of our acquaintance tells us that he has absolutely given up trying to keep up with the latest legislation. "Every time a new law is passed," says he, "I break an old one."

Whether Washington swore or tippled is a question of no possible importance, it seems to us. Neither swearing nor tippling was frowned on in his day. He was a great and good man, according to the standards of his time, and that our more rigorous standards are producing greater and better men is open to some question.

Nursing bottles have been dug up by archaeologists at Carthage, teething rings in an Etruscan tomb, and rattles and kiddy cars at ancient Kish. The evidence that the ancients had kiddies, same as we do, begins to be overwhelming.

If we had a son and were looking for a place to educate him we should keep looking till we found the world's most unworldly university and then should enter him there. We should insist on a faculty of old-fashioned absent-minded or future-minded professors instead of the present-minded profs of our schools of commerce and publicity. No doubt we should do the boy a practical injustice in the matter of earning his daily bread. But he wouldn't come out a cake-eater or a money-grubber.

An interesting application of the new "insanity defense" is to breach of promise cases. Lawyers can cite practically all the poets and philosophers to prove that lovers are crazy.

The other day we asked our friend, the G.O.P. politician, what he thought of Abraham Lincoln's "You cannot fool all of the people all the time."

"So long as you can fool a majority of the people every four years it suffices," said he, "for the needs of our party government."

From free verse to Charlie Chaplin's walk no great new movement has ever been wholly original. There were splay-footed poets before Walt Whitman and flat-footed comics before Chaplin. But the credit for an artistic movement belongs to the man that makes the public conscious of it.

Can it be that the movement for elaborate trade names is on the wane? The undertakers still stick for "morticians" and the barbers hold out for "chiro-tonsors" but the chiropractors show signs of preferring the old-fashioned doctor.

We wonder why Mr. Lincoln could be called Abe with no loss of dignity, but Mr. Coolidge can't be called Cal without a suspicion of ridicule.

Literary conversation may be divided into small talk and big talk inasmuch as the literati talk small about the books of others and big about their own.

A German playwright has written a play which brings only one actor on the stage. This realizes the dreams of every actor from the beginning of the theatre.

The love interest in this one-man play is simple and realistic. The actor is made to fall desperately in love with himself.

The worst thing against the deferred payment or installment plan is that it keeps you paying for a thing a long time after you are tired of it. And the worst form of deferred payments is alimony. Jacob, working seven years to get Rachel, perhaps thought his lot a hard one. But how much more fortunate he than the modern Jacob who gets Rachel at once and then works seven years to get rid of her!

Graduation exercises have just been held at the Chicago Hobo college and it is said that more than half the class have flattering offers to enter the vagabond business.

"Bernard Shaw Asks $65,000 to Tell What He Knows." —Headline. This is said to be the highest price ever paid for a short story.

That quack doctors existed in 1600 B.C. has just been proved by an Egyptian manuscript, and the press seems to find it very wonderful. But the really wonderful thing, we should say, is the fact that quack doctors still flourish in 1925, when the world is old enough to know better.

American audiences have lost the fine art of hissing, a speaker tells drama leaguers. But they have developed instead the arts of coughing, yawning, laughing in the wrong place, and getting up and going out.

Nothing lends more dignity to a nobody than an anonym. A peck is all the better hiding under a bushel.

Reading the high diplomatic news we gather that the great difficulty wherever diplomats are met is "to find a basis on which conversations can be held." It isn't so simple as in private life, where the mere dropping of a handkerchief often provides a basis for conversations between total strangers which quickly leads to the most interesting results.

The bones of the original American camel, 6,000,000 years old, have been found in Wyoming.

The Anti-Saloon league should see that the remains of this grand old pioneer are placed in a suitable mausoleum.

The prize baby at the Aurora baby show was pronounced only 99.97 perfect. The parents were too indignant to be interviewed.

The very first man to be killed in the Trojan war was Protesilaus. And it is recorded that Helen, as she looked down from her seat over the Scaean gate, said to old King Priam with something between a gasp and a giggle, "It's the first time a fella was killed in a fight about me."

Fundamentalist circles are said to be eagerly discussing the news that a rich find of new religious data has been made in Tut's casket.

An eastern college is under fire for having offered reduced tuition rates to athletes. To us it seems fair enough that athletes should get tuition cheaper than other students. They make less use of it.

John Hays Hammond has perfected a device to make a piano giggle like a saxophone. Mr. Hammond no doubt believes that the cure for modern music is the same as the cure for war. It must be made too terrible.

An honor list of ten Jews who have done most for America has been picked by readers of the *Jewish Tribune.* And in the ten there is not a single writer, artist, musician, theatrical man or movie producer. Considering the importance of Jewish leadership in all these lines, the list seems to be another proof that the arts are not taken very seriously by the general public.

No doctor can play good bridge, says Prof. James Weber Linn. We would not go so far as that, but we have noticed one weakness in bridge-playing physicians, which is hard to reconcile with the ethics of their profession. No doctor can hold a fine hand without visible excitement.

H. L. Mencken is the big butter and egg man of books, and the proof of it is that he criticizes literature in terms applicable only to butter, eggs, cheese, rubber and oils. "Read only read-in-America books. Look for the label. Burn our own midnight oil. The british gushers have all petered out, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, no longer producing."

When you read any fine or beautiful work of the imagination do you care whether it was made in Germany, England or America? Nationalism is nowhere so narrow as when it cramps the imagination and commercialism is at no time so mean as when it obstructs the traffic in ideas.

We refuse to view with alarm the fact that marriages declined and divorces increased last year. The pendulum will swing next year when all these divorcees go into the market for new husbands.

The first genuine contemporary statuette of Socrates has just been found and bought by the British museum. It is minus one foot and the face is slightly henpecked.

Miss Carrie King, who was the first Buttercup in "Pinafore," has been rejuvenated by Dr. Voronoff and is on her way to America to preach the gospel of monkey glands. We imagine that this would have tickled the author of "Pinafore" could he have lived to see it and that he would have written quite a comical poem about a renovated Buttercup and her apostolic mission.

Clarence Darrow of Chicago took the negative side of the proposition, "Is the Human Race Worth Working For?"

We thought that depended on the size of the retainer.

The rural reader who sent us an ear of corn has mistaken his column. We're not in the feed business. Keep your grain and send us the chaff.

Certain college coaches who have been complaining of small squads this season might play up the travel feature as the navy does: "Come out for the team and see the country."

Bulgaria is reported quiet, in the Balkan sense of the word—so quiet that you can hear a bomb drop.

The feminine costume is what mathematicians call a variable approaching the limit.

Iconoclasm is the smart thing just now, but to the detached eye the Rotarians are not a whit more ridiculous than the Iconoclasts. Put this down in your note book: "There's just as much bunk among the busters as among the boosters."

Woodrow Wilson's portrait is to be placed on a 13-cent or a 17-cent stamp. For quiet recognition without vulgar publicity this is comparable to a membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Ovid in his *Heroïdes* has left us a series of beautiful and polished love letters from the unhappy heroines of antiquity to their more or less faithful lovers. These epistles are as a poet imagined them, but the truth was probably something else again. For instance, we suspect that what Hero wrote Leander after waiting up all night for him, and before the finding of the body, ran somewhat as follows:

Listen, Leander, I kno it was ruff last night and I wouldn't have you take any chances, but I want you to beleve your littel gurl was lonely. I have had some sweethearts, but I never missed one like I do you, for no one ever loved and caressed me like you do, Leander. Well, dear, I gues I will have to come to a close and will see you tonite if it isn't too ruff and the water is warm. Love, best wishes. Hero.

Our laws resemble our jokes in that the old ones are the best. But our jokes differ from our laws in this respect, they can be cracked over and over without being broken.

Any way you look at the activities of Edward Bok, he is a sign and a portent. Mr. Bok is the most distinguished example of the doctrine that a business man when he reaches a certain age and income tax should retire and give the next man a chance. Mr. Bok retired—but where? Into the foreground and the spotlight. Instead of bossing the plowing like Cincinnatus or growing pumpkins like Diocletain, Mr. Bok has written books, offered peace prizes, organized propaganda, persecuted the United States senate.

When a business man like Mr. Bok takes off the harness, a tremendous amount of energy is liberated from driving the wheels of industry. This energy is not going to disappear. It may spend itself in aimless thrashing around in public or it may hitch itself to some great public movement and pull.

The question whether business men should retire or not depends on how you look at Mr. Bok. Certain honorable men and United States senators feel that every business man should mind his own business until he is too old to meddle with politics.

Photos by telephone being now a fact, we suggest an up-to-date simile: "She has a face like a wrong number."

Whimsical was a fine word, a very fine word, but it's dead. You see, it's gone into advertising. Words are like authors; they die to all literary purposes when they go into advertising.

We often wonder how much of the ironic biography now so popular is taken in dead earnest by serious readers. There is no means of insuring that what is written with a grain of salt will be read in the same way.

Undoubtedly there is too much advertising on the air, but an improvement is in sight. Large advertisers are beginning to demand that their stuff be broadcast next to pure listening matter.

Saving the homes of great writers is a fairly economical activity in the case of the older authors who mostly lived and died in one place and one house. But when it comes to saving the homes of our wandering moderns like Sinclair Lewis, Ben Hecht, and Sherwood Anderson posterity is going to be up against it. It might be well for every modern writer to designate a favorite and official home for the guidance of posterity.

The way of a young man waiting for something to turn up, among editors waiting for something to turn down, is tough.

Major humorists from Aristophanes to Mark Twain have always pictured the nether world as an inviting place full of low jokes and good company.

Mr. Gilbert Seldes is a confident young man with an almost universal range. His trouble is too much gammon in his gamut.

A growing intolerance for "cleverness" as shown in epigrams, "nifties" and "wise cracks" is observable among our serious critics. But we suspect it is with these things as with diamonds according to "boss" Conner's dictum: "Them as has 'em wears 'em."

For some time we have needed a term to describe the type of mind that makes little journeys to the shrines of great and near-great authors. Henceforth we will call them literary shriners.

The question has been put to us whether "this is the smuttiest age of literature." By no means. In this respect we do not think present-day literature compares with the eighteenth century. This is the first age in which "smut" has been claimed to be important, that's all.

A highbrow is a man who doesn't know what he likes, but knows a lot about art.

Carl Sandburg's life of Lincoln we dare say is one of the great and lasting biographies. It shows the same kind of devotion that Boswell gave his Johnson, and resembles that book also in having grown slowly with infinite pains through many years. By natural sympathy with men of the prairie mold and by immersing himself in every sort of record of the time, Sandburg has managed to write like a contemporary and companion of Lincoln.

Poet Nicholas Vachel Lindsay has sworn off women's teas. Vachel was always a bone dry and now he is a teatotaler. This, we fear, is going too far. A poet who is fit company for neither man nor club lady is in a fair way to become an embittered solitary.

"Bolt Lodged in Boy's Lung."—Headline.

This should be a warning to little boys who bolt their food.

Ulysses may be briefly described as a train of thought derailed at intervals.

Advertising slogan for a rock-ribbed conservative magazine or newspaper: "Every number a back number!"

We have made it the test of a good ghost story that it should not evoke the ghost of a smile.

A showing of movies to the Highland Park zoo at Pittsburgh before one hundred psychologists, zoologists and other scientists has produced some interesting reactions. The lion roared at fun from the press, the hyena laughed in the most serious places, the monkeys ate peanuts audibly, and there was petting in the darker cages, but this highly creditable fact was noted in favor of the animal audience: Not a single dumb beast was so dumb as to read the captions out loud.

American women now spend $5,000,000 a day in beauty parlors. The gap between truth and beauty gets wider every day.

Radio efforts to get Glasgow seem to show that the Scotch are not so close as has been generally supposed.

To a specialist in French and German writers a beard is a professional necessity, but Ernest Boyd does not allow his beard to wag his chin, if you get what we mean.

A typical New Yorker, we gather from eastern column discussion, is a typical midwesterner who has lived a year in New York.

But a typical midwesterner, we know from talking to any number of them, is a man who couldn't live in New York under any circumstances.

Headlines are giving us a new language, Louis Untermeyer tells poetry lovers. This makes good talk, but we don't believe a word of it. It is amazing how little headlines affect the spoken language. People accept a headline for what it is, a convenient shorthand, but they don't talk it. Nobody says, "I'm going to the net tilt," when he means the tennis match. Neither does anyone speak of being "called to probe," meaning a summons to appear in court. Your neighbor remarks, "Pretty snappy weather yesterday," not "We certainly have been gripped by frigid blast." Boreas, Old Sol, J. Pluvius, Nimrod, Nemesis, Solon, etc. are never heard of outside of headlines. Nobody calls an opera singer a "diva" or a football man a "grid warrior." The truth of the matter is that when a word gets into the headlines it is done for in popular speech. The most classical old-fashioned English in the world to-day is the headlines of American newspapers.

We have only one objection to the prize-novel contests now so popular and that is the limitation to "first novels"

by hitherto-unknown writers. Why not a prize for last novels by well-known writers? We know any number of well-known writers whose last novel we should be glad to see.

A pastor of New London, Conn., has been asked to resign his pulpit because, according to the church committee, he referred to his wife too often in his sermons.

There is a warning for us colyumists in this sad affair. We have always felt that our congregations might resent our continual dragging in of family and favored associates into our colyums.

Yet colyumnists will do it. Jay E. House has raised his wife Adelaide to a parity with him in the colyum. Heywood Broun has educated his infant son in public. "F.P.A." can hardly write a colyum without dragging in his cat, "Mistah," and Arthur Brisbane pats and strokes his pet lamb, Editor Curley of the Chicago American, "R.H.L." talks of Evangeline and Helen Henna, Teddy Linn of the Herald and Examiner has a schoolboy pal who fills many a colyum, while our neighbor "Riq" speaks often and fondly of Anthea and the child Doris.

It is an amiable weakness, but still, we believe, a weakness, for the occupant of a colyum or pulpit lives in the limelight, exposed to many jealousies that he can hardly suspect. Human nature being what it is, it is safer to ventilate one's enmities than one's affections from a pulpit. As we have no enmities we are hard put to it at times. Still, we manage to get along by quoting Mrs. Hit or Miss without credit.

Much reading maketh not only a full man but often a fuddled one.

Of true stories about the late William Jennings Bryan the most characteristic comes to us from a close friend of the family. In 1896, when Mr. Bryan was preparing for his free silver campaign, he examined a certain politician for a place as committeeman.

"Do you believe in 16 to 1?" asked the great Commoner.

"Yes, but of course I'm not a damn fool about it."

"Then you're not the man for me!" said Mr. Bryan, closing the interview.

When you read a pompous bit of writing with an ostentatiously highbrow air and a great display of book learning, beware of concluding that the author is a schoolmarm, a professor, or even a college graduate. The odds are ten to one that he or she is entirely self-educated. The newly-reads, like the newly-rich, are particularly apt to make a vulgar display of intellectual goods and chattels.

Prohibition presents odd contrasts. You can see, as we did yesterday, an honest workman washing down his lunch with cold coffee out of an old Taylor flask or a more or less honest millionaire taking his whiskey in a teacup.

Much ado is made in our papers over the organization of a "Gravediggers' Union" in Chicago. Cemetery employes were unionized as long ago as the first century A.D. See Martial's epigram:

"Diaulus, who was doctor, has joined the doctor's guild;
So now Diaulus buries where then Diaulus killed."

Some of the most famous crimes in history were committed by unknown wretches. For example, see Webster's dictionary: "Pun—origin uncertain."

Reading so-called "criticism" in America we remark that the sure-fire dodge of a "critic" who knows nothing about the art he is describing is to describe it in terms of some other art that he knows less about. Thus the bewildered book critic says that his writer has tempo and pitch. The critic of painting speaks of epic sweep or lyric lightness of touch. The music critic burbles of color tones, stipple scales, melodic brush work and heaven knows what. So long as a critic sticks to the terms of his art it is possible that he knows what he is talking about. When he passes the buck to the jargon of some allied art we feel sure that he is wandering in Egyptian darkness.

An instance of poor advertising psychology, we believe, is the growing practice of putting 2-cent stamps on 1-cent circular letters. We may drop an undisguised advertising letter into the waste basked unopened, but at least we hold no grudge against the sender. But when we find what looks like a letter and find an ad, we are henceforth full of spite, spleen and sales resistance against that particular advertiser.

After a careful reading of reviews on Ben Hecht's latest salvo of shockers we find that Ben's critics divide into two classes: the admiring ones, who think Ben is interested in sex only as it affects the mind, and the disgusted ones, who think Ben is interested in the mind only as it is affected by sex. The distinction is subtle, but you may get it if you study long enough.

Radio is of course a great boon to the farmer. But it is doubtful whether it will ever take the place of listening in on the old party line.

Ringling Brothers announce that they will abandon trained wild animal acts involving lions, tigers and other dangerous beasts, "as they alarm a certain class of circus goers." For a time, at least, the little brown bear will be permitted to roller skate and the seals to sport with their big rubber ball, but we must miss the kick we got when the tiger laid back his ears and spat at the pretty lady with the revolver and the riding whip.

The big cats are poor performers and their acts are interesting only in proportion to the supposed danger to the trainer. So it seems fair enough to wean the public from this barbarous pleasure. But circus men take a chance when they let sentimentalism get its head inside the circus tent. What about the lady who hangs by her teeth, the lady who swings by one arm and the poor clown who has got to smile with a bursting pack of firecrackers in the seat of his pants! Is there nothing in these things to harrow delicate sensibilities?

Shorter coats at this year's fur show are said to raise hopes for father's purse. We're afraid it only means that father will get less for his money.

Francis X. Bushman publicly admits that he is a grandfather, which means, we suppose, that he is *fini* as a film idol. Screen heroes may get away with being fathers, but when they blossom into grandfatherhood it is too much. At that the film public is more tolerant than the magazines. A well-known Evanston novelist once told us how he sent a serial to the *Saturday Evening Post* in which the heroine had a daughter in her teens. It was promptly returned by Editor Lorimer, with a request to cut out the daughter. "No heroine can have a grown daughter in the *Saturday Evening Post*," said Mr. Lorimer.

We rather deplore the prevailing notion that visiting New York literati must be shown that Chicago is just as live and anti-Volstead as New York. The result is a terrific strain on all concerned.

The flapper type, says Francine Larrimore, stands as a symbol of the advance of civilization. Then some people will say that civilization has gone far enough.

Some of these "print dresses" the girls are wearing look to us like typographical errors.

Every working girl must have a beau, a social expert tells the welfare conference. That a working girl must have some one to work should be obvious to anybody.

Rembrandt painted himself forty-eight times, according to the *Daily News*. That's not much of a record. We know a flapper who paints herself every day.

It can't be denied that men were ever brutes and women have had much to complain of. But it puts one a little out of sorts the way the poets all sing and the playwrights all write, as if there were no such thing as alimony.

"Teach your boy to play a saxophone and he will be too busy to think of crime," says a California musician.

A new definition of crime seems to be called for.

Owing to the odd notions of news values entertained by some foreign correspondents, a movie star, a prize fighter, an ex-follies beauty or a young intellectual can obtain

about five times as much space in American newspapers by cavorting around the cabarets of Paris as by staying at home. In fact, Paris may now be defined as the place where all bad Americans go when their publicity dies on them.

We see no reason why Chicago should not, as predicted by fifteen eminent physicians, lead the world in behavior research. She already leads the world in behavior of every sort and description.

A goldfish may well resent the frequently repeated insinuation that he has no more privacy than an American citizen. A goldfish's home is his castle, in which he can be as wet as he pleases.

David Belasco is to give his personal supervision to movie production. Nature will have to look more natural than she has ever done before when Mr. Belasco superintends an outdoor setting.

Somebody asked Mr. McFee whether, like most novelists, he was working on a play.

"Well," he said, "I have a lot of mean remarks saved up to use some time."

Ten minutes after two Chicago pickpockets were arrested they were out on writs of habeas corpus. There's many a slip 'twixt the cop and the dip.

The ornithological world is said to be shocked by disclosures that the wren is polygamous.

Jenny Wren and the little white hen are sisters under the feathers.

The immiment return of *Abie's Irish Rose* has Chicago dramatic critics in a high state of indignation. This is where the irresistible farce meets the immovable objection.

Some husbands take French leave; others get Paris divorces.

A Scotch friend who has taken a course in lip reading tells us it saves him money on the New York subway. He gets all the scandal without buying a tabloid.

"Educator Lauds Modern Youth."—Headline.

By Pulitzer definition this is not news. If it were "Modern Youth Lauds Educator" an eight-column front page line would not be too much for it.

Alarmists who complain that the Japanese navy is increasing faster than ours should be silenced by the news that the Japanese islands are sinking, and will eventually disappear beneath the Pacific. Surely Japan should be allowed to prepare for the time when she must be all navy.

Mussolini has devised nothing neater in the line of paternalistic legislation than his decree forbidding parents to give babies "ridiculous, shameful, or subversive names." Gov. Hogg's unfortunate daughters, Ima, Ura, etc. would have been protected against their sardonic papa under Mussolini. Lean Ginster's parents could not have made her a laughing stock for life.

Opinion may be divided on that section of the decree which prohibits nobodies from tagging their progeny with the surnames or Christian names of famous or illustrious parents. Under this law only a very distinguished bambino can be christened Benito. Names like Julius Caesar and

Caesar Augustus will be restricted to Caucasian fascisti of the first families in Italy.

Such a law would not go in this democracy, where it is the most cherished privilege of rural proletarians to produce a little Calvin Coolidge Brown or a little Woodrow Wilson Cohen, not to mention the George Washington Joneses and the Abraham Lincoln Smiths. Nevertheless, there is something to be said for Mussolini's idea. Little pitchers should not have bigger handles than they are able to carry with dignity.

In addition to naming the all-star team and the most useful player, grid critics should honor the college prexy who has been most helpful to his team, for the person who thinks there can be good football teams without helpful prexies is a blessed innocent.

Married men drive more carefully than bachelors, according to automobile insurance actuaries. He travels fastest who travels alone, said the old proverb.

A man arrested by the New York police as a gentleman burglar claims to be a professional tea-taster. This is embarrassing to the police, whose beverage experience gives them no standard for testing tea-tasters.

Poland's constitution has not been violated by the revolution, Warsaw claims. Poland is to be congratulated on her strong constitution.

Philip Guedalla, the young English historian, is obviously in error when he says Ben Franklin has had more things named after him than any other American. Henry Ford has about 9,000,000 more things named after him than did Ben Franklin.

"I have never kicked a bear in his native habitat," writes Junius Wood from Siberia. Junius is to be congratulated. His native habitat is one of the very tenderest places in which you can kick a bear.

The first effect of Siberian home brew, according to Junius, is wailing. After a short period of wailing the drinkers begin to yodel. We devoutly hope that Junius will not bring the formula for Siberian beer to America, as it would make apartment life practically unbearable.

The lighter and more trivial the topic, the better the ballade. The best ballade ever written dealt with the ladies.

The fault with American education begins with the bottom, where children are relieved of discipline and encouraged to "express themselves" before they have anything to express. But the trouble caused by university methods in the kindergarten cannot be cured by nursery methods in the university.

What is claimed to be the most antique human skull has just been unearthed by a savant in Australia. It may not be genuine Adam, but it is certainly older than Piltdown or Chippendale.

We read of a new model talking machine that it can reduce to a mere whisper a volume of sound sufficient to fill the largest auditorium, and we can hardly wait to try a Sophie Tucker record on it.

The old-fashioned conscience seems to survive amongst us in the persons who filed returns for taxes of 1 cent and 2 cents respectively. A cynic of our acquaintance hints, however, that these taxpayers are probably persons of Scotch extraction acquiring merit at bargain prices.

A Chicago gunman has been shot dead at Dubuque, Iowa, because he forgot to slip the safety catch off his gat. Another case of a metropolitan artist getting too careless while playing the provinces.

The marine song has it that when the army and navy get to heaven they will find the marines standing guard at the pearly gates and patrolling the golden streets. This is barely possible, but we think it much more likely that the marines will have been ordered to hell to protect the rights of American citizens there.

Baseball fans should be careful never to judge by circumstantial evidence. Many a base that looks to be stolen really has been bought and paid for.

According to figures obtained by the *Daily News*, Chicago women can dress in from five to fifteen minutes. But the time in which a woman can dress has nothing to do with the time in which she does, especially when a man is waiting.

Masculine fashions will not make the flapper equal to man, declares Dr. Adler. They can only show her inferiority complex. That was about all that remained to be shown.

Hardly a day passes without some minister's proposing a shorter version of the Ten Commandments adapted to the hurried reader of to-day. If Moses had foreseen the demands of the present news-reading public he would have handed down the law not on tablets but on tabloids.

Sir Harry Lauder is said to have been insulted when a New York reporter asked him if he wore rubber collars.

With the present high cost of rubber such a question is an insult to any reasonably canny Scotchman.

The biggest American economic question: Is it better to have a big equity in a small automobile or a small equity in a big automobile?

"No man dare write the truth about marriage so long as his wife lives," says G. Bernard Shaw with less than his usual accuracy.

"No man dare write the truth about marriage as long as his wife lives with him," would be closer to Mr. Shaw's meaning.

We know modern novelists who have told what they allege to be the truth about as many as three wives, all still alive and kicking ineffectually.

The dry law is a child without a father, declares Dr. Leigh Clovin. In other words, it is America's war baby.

The real test of salesmanship, says a successful clothing salesman of our acquaintance, is to sell a two-pants suit to the man with a one-pants mind.

"Organist's Wife Disappears."—Headline.

"Police Pump Organist," is the natural follow-up.

That Thomas Edison has O.K.d the flapper does not surprise us. The father of the talking machine could hardly condemn the flapper.

When Capt. Gilbert Frankau quit cigar making for novel writing he did not find his training wasted. The art of the

novelist and the cigar maker are much the same, a matter of fitting tasty wrapper to satisfying filler.

Europe calls Uncle Sam a shylock and a skinflint. "The skinflint you love to touch," should be our national reply.

We disagee with Albert J. Nock, who has written an article to the effect that conversation is a lost art in America because Americans insist on talking shop. The most interesting conversations we have are with men who talk shop, for a man's own business is something he knows thoroughly and on which he is likely to have ideas that are novel and original. The trouble with conversation in America is that so many people don't talk shop, but do talk about automobiles, golf and prohibition, about none of which is it possible to say anything either new or interesting.

Spring poetry is a standing joke to every one but a column conductor. To him it is a serious problem, if not a positive menace.

Attacks on the Leiter girls for marrying into the Curzon family do not impress us. The Leiter girls drove the best bargain ever made in the international marriage market, and Chicago business men should be proud of them. No titled brides have ever obtained more sheer nobility combined with ability. Lord Curzon was proud and arrogant, according to Joseph Leiter's lawyer. In other words, he was a genuine dyed-in-the-wool peer of England. If the Leiter girls had preferred kind hearts to coronets, and simple faith to Norman blood, there were plenty of nature's noblemen here in Chi.

Salaries out here sound like telephone numbers, writes a visitor in Hollywood. Mostly wrong numbers, we suspect.

A complete musical revue is to be staged on every trip of the Leviathan. Wanted: cuties with sea legs and ship shapes.

Whatever the sins of the Chicago Literary school, we'll say this for them: They are more written about than writing.

Our notion of a limited appeal in success articles is one in current *Fruit, Home and Garden*, on "How to Succeed with Lima Beans."

What the world wants to know is how to succeed with no bean at all.

Dr. P. M. Symonds estimates that the average mentality of the American male is that of a 13.2-year-old-boy, a wrong-headed, pessimistic way of stating it. Put it that the average 13.2-year-old boy in this country has the mentality of a grown man, and you realize what a precocious up-and-coming people we are.

The old-fashioned cad who kissed and told was a gentleman compared to the modern sheik who carries a "date book" full of young women's names and telephone numbers. These date books, found on dead bandits, are helpful to the police but hard on the peace of mind and happiness of confiding flappers.

We see by Hendrik Van Loon's *Story of the Bible* that Noah took his animal cargo aboard "for food and sacrifices." This explains for the first time the riddle of defunct

species. Science has not been able to discover the missing link because Noah ate it his first day aboard. The dodo and the pterodactyl were also represented in the ark, but made a meal for Noah while our smaller poultry was preserved for laying. The peculiar deliciousness of the dinosaur's meat accounts for his perishing, while the elephant survived. Mr. Van Loon has gone a long way toward clearing up the differences between science and religion.

Oh, who is the cook and the captain bold?

"Cave Woman takes Musician as Third Mate."—Headline.

The Jumping Shrimp.

"Shrimps Jump 35 cents a Pound in a Day."—Headline.

Every little market has a language all its own, and we should like to hear more of the fish market. What with eels sliding off a couple of points, clams quiet but firm and oysters opening steady, the fish ticker should make rare League Tea.

No man can make a harem happy, says Miss Rebecca West. Rebecca has never seen H. B. Warner at a Drama League Tea.

Exercise on the Hyphen.

All lawyers want brief-cases; no lawyer wants brief cases.

Uncle Sam used to suggest to us a nervy nonchalant old Yankee, full of horse sense and humorous philosophy.

He now appears to be a nervous, irascible old gentleman, full of jumps and fidgets, afraid of shadows and whispers. Furthermore, he has become sentimental, given to suddenly

producing a flag in all companies and bursting into tears if it is not instantly recognized.

Most significant perhaps is his attitude toward children. He formerly did not heed their infantile prattle, although quick to discipline if they got into real mischief. But now if two or three gather together in a corner of the nursery he rushes at them with a stick, screaming that they are talking about him behind his back or plotting to put peace dope in his porridge.

Persons with epilepsy, says a handwriting expert, will begin a signature, hesitate, begin again, hesitate, etc.

Imagine the torment of a realtor who has brought an epileptic to the point of signing on the dotted line!

Steady drinkers, according to the tables prepared by Dr. Raymond Pearl of Johns Hopkins University, have a longer life expectancy than total abstainers. No physiological reason for this difference seems available, so the explanation must lie in the field of psychology. The will-to-live is half the battle of life and the wets have more to live for.

"All races who live mainly on fish, such as the Eskimos, have small eyes."—*Pittsburgh Dispatch.*

Indicating an entirely new relation between hooks and eyes.

A thing that always delights us is the way that each man's ears are sharpened to what concerns his own profession. Clem Shorter, the *London Sphere's* book reviewer, recently attended the funeral of Sir William Robertson Nicolls. The sermon was preached by a highland Scot. "I could not understand a word of it," reports Clem, "or, at least, only the statement that Sir William had received a

'good press'. This was scarcely the case," continues Clem, seriously, pointing to the fact that, although some of the obits were a bit blurbish, the *Manchester Guardian* held its usual unbiased post-mortem on the deceased.

We doubt whether adequate analysis has yet been made of the degree to which professional bias alters taste in every direction. No 'realtor' finds a good word to say for Sinclair Lewis' "Babbitt and no undertaker, or rather—pardon our gaucherie!—no mortician sees merit in Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice'." Bassanio's bad taste in picking the cheapest casket has sufficed to alienate the entire mortuary guild.

The most successful operation may be followed by disastrous complications. For example, the removal of Adam's extra rib.

Should our statisticians find time hanging heavy on their hands they might compute the average per annum per capita consumption of statistics by the typical American citizen. Also the amount of midnight oil burned in preparing the dry fodder for the nosebags of the reading public. It is our opinion that there is more midnight oil spent on statistics than on all useful pursuits put together.

"The sweetest word in the language is Mother."—Confectionary ads.

Comes a discordant note from the pickle manufacturers to remind us that there is mother in the vinegar.

The atom will shortly be harnessed, says Sir Oliver Lodge, and set to doing the work of the world. The sooner the atom is harnessed the better, say we. In our opinion the atom has loafed quite long enough.

The question whether a good poet can come out of Kansas is being eagerly debated in eastern circles. We should say the sooner he came out the better.

The way the eugenics people keep raising the entrance requirements to the human race we're often surprised to think we ever got in on it.

Friends of "the American language" generally credit it with a superior terseness. It occurred to us the other day that Englishmen ride in prams, trams, tubes and lifts, Americans in baby carriages, street cars, subways and elevators. The English language seems to have all the shortest cuts in the field of transportation.

Twelve earthquakes, with no damage, are reported from Los Angeles. What is so mild (yet bracing) as a Los Angeles earthquake? There isn't a headache in a dozen temblors of it.

Old Soaks and Nouveau-Wets

Don Marquis' "Old Soak," with its mellow tavern atmosphere, must recall a lot to the drinking gentry of pre-prohibition days. But to the upstart drinkers of the last ten years, the thousands of nouveau-wets, as we may call them, how little these pictures of the old regime can suggest.

This column has always stood for personal liberty rather than prohibition of matrimony. Marriage is a good thing for those who can take it or leave it alone.

Prof. Michelson announces that Antares, in the constellation Scorpio, has a diameter of 420,000,000 miles, and

again, as happens every time Prof. Michelson takes the waist measure of a star, our editorial brethren all over the country are overwhelmed with humiliation at the smallness of little old earth. For our part it troubles us not at all. Earth is a poor thing, perhaps, but our own! And at that it seems a deal too big for us to manage. A filip for gaseous Antares and Betelgeuse, the big bloat! Let us set our house in order and have done with cosmic Babbittry!

From book to photoplay, every stage in this complex process, is the interesting program promised by the book department of a local store this week. Go and see the books weighed and purchased by the movie buyers, butchered by the continuity men, tuned by the directors, labeled by the captionists and inspected and passed by the censors. Every move in this great industry, the acme of modern efficiency and sanitation, will be reproduced, and all of it is painless, odorless, and noiseless, even the squeals of the authors having been carefully eliminated.

G. Bernard Shaw has had to cut the manuscript of a play so New York commuters can catch their trains. That's what comes of trying to do urbanities for suburbanites.

The fact that the automobile has so nearly lost its thrill reminds us that, in this age of miracles, invention quickly stales and adventure is hard to come by. But, if one reflects, a certain compensatory movement is constantly going on. As the motorist loses his thrill the pedestrian gains it. Walking, so dull to our grandfathers, will be the great adventure to our children. Already statistics prove that the stroll of to-day is more deadly than the battle of yesterday.

We have been trying to extract the moral from the career of A. F. Burrows, who began life selling the *Chicago Daily News* from a soap-box news stand and is now the president of a soap company. Do you suppose if he had started business on a cracker barrel he would now be president of the National Biscuit Company?

"Kipling will live," reports Philip Guedalla in Vanity Fair after a hasty examination of the patient's works, major and minor. We can imagine no greater satisfaction to a writer than to find himself alive after he had been given up by the younger generation. Maybe there is hope yet for Tennyson and Dickens.

The *Thaïs* of Marie Jeritza, as one would expect, proves inferior to that of Mary Garden. "Instead of imitating the postures of Aphrodite," says an eastern critic, "she assumed a few Delsarte gestures and let it go at that." You may or you may not like the Garden voice, but no one has ever said of our Mary that she let it go at that.

To make a "regular" physician takes a dozen years more or less. But a "finished chiropractor" can be turned out in eighteen months, according to Dr. A. K. Golden of the National College of Chiropractic. It seems fair to assume that the eighteen-month chiropractor cannot be as highly "finished" as the twelve-year physician any more than the one-a-minute flivver can have the springs of a $5,000 car. But if you don't mind the bumps, a chiropractor may take you where we're all going as surely as an M.D., and a good deal quicker, maybe.

Professional genealogists are doing a record business this spring, reports Frederic Haskin from Washington.

Revolutionary ancestors are in special demand owing to the D.A.R. convention, but any good old stock, Scotch or English preferred, finds a ready market.

The surprising thing about this business of genealogy, comparatively an infant industry in America, is that it has done so well without advertising. But that must come. For your live-wire genealogist, who wants the real Ritzy trade we suggest the following layout:

THE PEDIGREE SHOPPE

Nordic nomenclature our specialty.
Blots on scutcheons dry cleaned and oil stains removed.
Coats of arms expunged and pressed while you wait.
Bar sinisters rectified.

Sometimes we think the column cast of mind an unmitigated curse. For instance, one afternoon we heard the vibrant voice of little Edna St. Vincent Millay intone that beautiful first line of her austere sonnet: "Euclid alone has looked on beauty bare."

And instantly there flashed before our eyes the front page of the *Alexandria Herald and Geometer* with first column head: EUCLID BARES TRIANGLE!

A large audience of Chicago high school students was recently addressed by a member of the Banker's Association, the subject of the discourse, naturally, being thrift. From a general discussion of how to open savings accounts the speaker wound up to an eloquent conclusion on the power of money. "Money," he perorated, "Money—children, put this down on your pads—money will buy everything that is for sale." This said, the speaker sipped his glass of water, turned to the principal and asked if he had any more time. Assured that he had still two minutes, he continued in lower tones that money was, after all, not everything. The man

of character in hard luck still counted for something. As the speaker stepped down from the platform (so "Bystander" tells us) another visiting dignitary rushed up to him and pumped his hand. "I'm glad you put in that about character," said the second visiting dignitary. "That always goes well."

If we had a modern Aesop, a subject that we should particularly recommend to him would be a dialogue between the Tooth, the Scalp, the Foot and the Waist-line as to which has the best right to hog all the space in the magazine advertising.

We cannot too strongly impress on our contribs the value of terseness. A good deal of life can be packed into a few sentences, as the judge said when he handed out the three twenty-year stretches.

As a prospective victim we shudder at the ad of a Chicago firm calling for "high-calibre, sure-fire salesmen." Our preference is for small-bore, self-ejecting salesmen, with silencers.

Paris newspapers are attacking the government for "engaging French finances to American bankers." But it isn't an engagement; it's a Morganatic marriage.

The use of antibodies or counter irritants in the cure of disease has lately met with considerable success, but it is still a problem how to control the antibodies. The same is true of society and politics. As a counter irritant to the saloon we devised that intensely busy antibody, the Anti-Saloon league. "The saloon is gone, but its antibody remains, feeding on and multiplying in the body politic. There can be too many even of benevolent parasites.

One cannot but admire the dexterity of our politicians, trading wallops in public and votes in private, letting not their right-hand men know what their left-hand men are doing.

Chatting with Dr. Hendrik Willem Van Loon over our cups (bowls of noodle soup, to be exact), we learned that something like half a million copies of *The Story of Mankind* had been sold at $5 per and that Horace Liveright, publisher of said "Story" was about to build him a new building. "Sort of a one-story building," said we. "Oh, no! He has a couple of other good books," said Dr. Hendrik Willem Van Loon.

It struck us the other day that we had seen the good old chess board simile applied to generals, statesmen, diplomats, in short, to everybody and everything but the movie director. And yet who is so much of a chess master as the movie director? Not only does his whole occupation consist in moving puppets around, but in every play he must lead up to a mating.

Some will remember the old Palmer house for the barber shop, paved with silver simoleons, the delight of rubes and one of the seven wonders of the west, the others being Heinegabubeler's, the Masonic Temple, the cataract at Niagara, the vats at Milwaukee, Bubbly creek and the Mammoth cave of Kentucky. Others will recall the Palmer house bar with its colossal battery of taps from which, like Pharphar and Abana, flowed, two by two, Bud and Blatz, Schlitz and Pabst, High Life and Alma Mater, each and all the boasted drafts of the brewmasters of the western world. Then there was the Palmer house restaurant with its choice hot breads. We used to breakfast there with an

Indiana humorist, who always concluded the meal in the same way. As he tipped the waiter he would hand out his card, saying, "Please give this to Mrs. Palmer and tell her that she makes the best biscuits!" The waiter always dropped the dime and sometimes a tray of dishes.

In graft investigations one distinguishes three stages: 1. Investigation to remove lid from graft. 2. Investigation to remove lid from investigation to remove lid from graft. 3. Nothing.

Evanston is the wettest spot on the north shore, says Ald. Knapp. Can it be that the cradle of prohibition needs an airing?

If George Washington Were Alive To-day

A quaint fallacy among amateur historians is assuming that famous people of the past, if they were alive to-day, would have the same standards they had a hundred or more years ago. Thus Rupert Hughes naively assumes that George Washington would be a "regular fellow" to-day because he drank a bottle of liquor a day, danced, swore, played cards, etc., in a time when all gentlemen did these things.

Washington was in fact a rock-ribbed conservative with the customs of his class. If Washington were alive to-day he would be a prohibitionist for economic reasons. He might or he might not have liquor in his home, as so many gentlemen do, but he would certainly vote dry for the best interests of the employer class.

If Washington were alive to-day he would prefer blondes as gentlemen now do. He would play a good deal of golf but he would not swear. Gentlemen don't. He would disapprove of the modern dances as immoral and disdain the

old-fashioned dances as vulgar because they have been endorsed by Henry Ford.

This is, as nearly as one may now infer, how a wealthy conservative of Washington's stamp would conduct himself to-day. We should add one thing. He would certainly not select Col. Rupert Hughes for his press representative.

Little Lessons in Government

What is the difference between the French house of deputies and the American house of representatives? The former are bulling the franc, while the latter are franking the bull.

The Extinct Comparative

The man who is positive about nothing is superlative about everything.

Add Civilized Minority

"I am one of that small minority," writes "D. D." to a local health column, "who have recovered from endocarditis." There are all kinds of dignities and distinctions. You may meet an unassuming chap who seems to you entirely insignificant and yet for all you know he may be one of the immortal few who never have had mumps or measles, pyorrhoea or halitosis.

The Iniquity of Oblivion

The niece of Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside is suing a shaving cream company to restrain it from using her uncle's name in the advertising.

A small thing oft oblivion's tide turns;
Burnside's remembered for his sideburns,
While generals greater but less hairy
To-day have grown inglorious, very.

General Burnside's niece does her uncle no kindness in trying to take his name out of the ads. The copy may not be exactly dignified or complimentary, but every knock is a boost in the ads. A historical personage can hardly expect to be advertised for the greatest things he did, since advertising is mostly concerned with small practical objects. Sir Walter Raleigh is mentioned to-day principally by dyers and cleaners in connection with the cloak episode. Pocohontas is the patroness of coal dealers. Benjamin Franklin is celebrated by savings banks. Looking to the future, Earl Carroll will not be remembered by students of the theater as a great producer but by the plumbing trade as the man who made the bathtub famous.

A Demiwet Demigod

Paul Bunyan, that mythical lumberjack of superhuman strength and shrewdness, has been much in print of late. Innumerable magazine articles and two full-length books on Paul's exploits have made his name a household word and given us a start toward a 100 per-cent American pantheon of indigenous heroes and demigods.

The lumberjack Hercules may be the most picturesque of our native demigods, but be is not the only one. There is the saga of Johnny Applejack, the Yankee Dionysus. As the Greek god toured India and the orient in his leopard-drawn chariot, teaching the uses of the grape, so Johnny Applejack went through Illinois, Iowa and Kansas in his covered wagon preaching the apple and telling his worshipers how to extract inspiration from its genial juices.

Wherever Johnny went through the midwest he left a trail of orchards, cider mills and domestic stills. Teaching the simple rustic how to get stewed on his own juices, Johnny put the kibosh on the rural saloon and made prohibition possible. Wet and dry can unite in sounding the praises of Johnny Applejack, our demiwet demigod.

The Grave Need of Being Light-Minded

"Is it possible," ponders Dr. Glenn Frank, "that the most serious need of the human race just now is comic relief?" We believe with Dr. Frank in the value of humor, but only essentially serious-minded people cry aloud that the human race needs comedy. The world was never so comic as it is right now for those who can see a joke. But nobody with a sense of humor talks of comic relief as a "serious need". The comic spirit is feminine and irresponsible. It comes when you don't want it; it flies when you pursue. It yawns at the *Follies* and laughs right out loud in church. The well meaning man who proposed national laugh week got only one laugh, and that at his own expense.

A Voice Crying in the Wilderness

Friend Lew Sarett, the poet of the woods, tells to the extent of a column in the *Daily News* why he has selected Laona, Forest County, Wisconsin, as a poetic hermitage. And so movingly does Lew describe the sequestered sites, the virgin timber, the teeming waters and the winelike ozone of the Wisconsin lake zone that caravans of flivver gypsies and swarms of summer colonists are certain to follow him into retirement. Had Lew been a partner in the Laona Lake Improvement and Land Development company he could not have worked more persuasively to people the wilderness. Yet that nothing could be further from Lew's thoughts we are sure.

The word has gone out in the *Daily News* and cannot be recalled. Our prediction is that within a year at most the woodland poet will find Laona overrun with flappers and flivvers and will have to pack his poetic traps and trek to more sequestered solitudes in which to park his Pegasus. Another time he will be warier. If a man find a bit of privacy far from the gadding crowd, a patch of

shade outside the garish spotlight, his cue is to keep it dark and silent as the grave. Otherwise the world will build a hard road to his door.

Satan Gets Behind the Times

That Satan finds work for idle hands to do was the theory of leisure for many centuries. Contrast this with the new idea in an interview with a prominent automotive millionaire in the *Saturday Evening Post*. "A five-day working week would extend American prosperity rather than decrease it. The reason is that men are more conscious of new needs in their leisure time than when they are busy."

In the bad old days, if you gave a man leisure the devil would tell him what to do with it. But now if you give him leasure he will realize (with the assistance of the *Saturday Evening Post*) that he needs a motor car, a radio, some golf clubs, etc., etc. And his hands will be so full that Satan will have no chance at them. In fact, we suspect that if Satan could be interviewed in hell by the perspiring reporter he would say that this age was too fast for him to keep up with.

The New Heavens and the New Earth

Millennial ideas change with the times. Up to a decade or two back the millennium was a religious conception. When clergymen and sages came together in synods and conferences, they saw rosy visions of an earthly paradise in which peace, piety, and prosperity should prevail on earth almost as they do in heaven.

Lately the clergy have seemed to lose faith in an earthly millennium. Postwar disillusion may have affected some. The dubious results of prohibition perhaps dishearten others. Whatever the cause, one finds pessimism rife among preachers and social philosophers. Jeremiads against jazz,

diatribes against dancing, have replaced utopian predictions.

Does this mean that the millennial dream is lost to humanity? Far from it. When Religion lost faith in the earthly paradise Science took it over. From every congress of chemists come jubilees, hosannas, and visions more marvelous than the prophets of old ever dreamed of.

In the chemical millennium the irresistible force will lie down with the immovable object and a little electron will lead them. We shall see a diseaseless, sleepless world in which men will live on the fat of the laboratory beyond the years of Methuselah. Best of all, men will live without working. The objection to all religious and philosophical schemes for the millennium was that they wouldn't work. The beauty of the chemical millennium is that they won't have to.

Men Who Lived Before Their Time

Socrates was the first philosopher to address himself to the man in the street. This was because his wife chased him out of the house. For attempting to popularize philosophy Socrates was henpecked and hemlocked. To-day he would be divorced and syndicated.

Achieving the Perfect Day

A complete prospectus for a "perfect day," formulated by the director of the institute for Life Extension, has recently been published. The proposals include rigid menus for persons stout, thin and medium, prescriptions for graded walks at specific hours and minute directions for selecting and distributing business, amusement and repose.

The perfect day is not a new project; neither is it altogether Utopian. The younger Pliny describes a friend of his, a Roman country gentleman, whose life was a procession of perfect days, blocked out in fifteen-minute periods

of walking, riding, bathing, reading, scientific eating and dreamless slumber. This gentleman had retired from business and, assisted by a staff of trainers, chefs and secretaries, was concentrating all his faculties on the perfect day.

Complete leisure and an expert staff presumably are prerequisites for an absolutely perfect day. The average specialized worker is bound to break the system somewhere. He sits, stands, eats, sleeps, reads, thinks, bathes or breathes too much or too little. For a busy man the perfect day appears as academic as the absolute vacuum.

For purposes of national education, however, it might be well to have an annual perfect day, in which every citizen should talk, walk, breathe and sleep by the book. Another day should perhaps be allowed for recuperating from the exhausting effects of this hygienic orgy.

The Difference

In business you get a job because you know something; in politics because you know somebody.

The New Indian Literature

James Fennimore Cooper first put the noble Indian into American literature, and the romantic Cooper Indian, with his lofty thoughts and eloquent language, was amiably accepted by the public. Then along came Mark Twain, shouting "Bosh!" and "Humbug!" After the tongue lashing Mark gave him, the Cooper Indian, or noble savage, went into a sort of decline. Now he is coming up again in new form.

The reincarnation of the Cooper Indian is due to a group of poets—women, mostly—who have been studying the gentle savages of the sunkissed southwest. Mrs. Alice Cor-

bin Henderson, Miss Amy Lowell, Mrs. Mary Austin and others have discovered a great aboriginal literature in Arizona and New Mexico which they have busily converted into vers libre.

The new noble savage is gentler and more feminine than the Cooper Indian. There is nothing rough about him except his meter. His gods and demigods are so-called culture heroes, who distributed pumpkin seeds like modern congressmen, and taught him eons back to beat his tomahawk into a pestle and his scalping knife into a paring tool. He sings interminable songs about the planting of corn and beans. His stanzas are, in fact, a kind of literary succotash, which is at least novel after the white poets' unpractical passion for mere flowers.

The new Indian poets are making literature safe for vegetables. Whether a truck garden of verses can be as popular as the old-time anthologies seems doubtful, but at least public attention should be directed to the earnest work that is being done in the aboriginal corn patch.

The Purlicity Everlasting

The Allied Arts association announces a subscription dinner to promote the memory of Eugene Field and Bert Leston Taylor. Promotions of this kind affect us curiously. We wonder what the illustrious dead think of the more or less illustrious living meeting to eat the delicacies appropriate to the season and utter the sentiments appropriate to the occasion for the everlasting glorification of the great. Somebody assuredly is glorified, but is it the illustrious dead?

In his arguments for the immortality of the soul Cicero includes as a kind of afterthought a thought of startling modernity—unique, so far as we know, in classical philosophy. "No one," says he, "has ever been able to persuade

me that the memory of great men and their achievements would endure so long were they not themselves still alive and active in promoting it." As Cicero saw it, the souls of the distinguished dead spend the long Elysian hours promoting their publicity and watching their political fences. Q. Horatius Flaccus deplores the decline of classics at the University of Chicago. The shade of Caxton sits in at meetings of the Caxton club doing what it can to pep up the somnolent proceedings. Shakespeare gnashes his teeth at the Baconian heresies of Col. Fabyan of Riverbank, Borgia puts it into Sabatini's head to whitewash him. Byron abets the plans of his centenary.

We don't believe it—at least, we don't believe it for those great men dead and gone who were blest or curst with a sense of humor in their lifetimes. It is quite possible that Walt Whitman may take a melancholy satisfaction in being ghost of honor at our local Whitman dinners, for Walt always took himself and others pretty seriously. But we don't believe Gene Field or Bert Taylor attend promotion dinners. Both of them were incorrigible humorists.

Cicero's notion of the publicity everlasting may be excused by the fact that he was more of a politician than a philosopher or man of letters. In his play, *The Frogs*, Aristophanes, pure humorist and man of letters, stages a quarrel in hades between the dead tragedians Aeschylus and Euripides. During this wrangle Aeschylus says by way of taunt to his rival: "Euripides is better known in hell than I am because his publicity died with him." Euripides makes no retort. A good deal of a humorist, for a tragedian, he was well satisfied apparently to be known only to a select audience of the best minds of all ages.

The Abuse of Illustrious Proper Names

The misuse of august proper names is one of the most patent abuses in contemporary journalese and especially in

the argot of book tasters. We suggest the following distinctions:

All that's lanky is not "Lincolnesque" and all that's fat is not "Falstaffian." For every long, lean, solemn fellow to be compared to honest Abe and every round-faced tub of tripe to be called after the illustrious Sir John is an outrage against two great names in history.

All that's ribald is not "Rabelaisian" and all that's gross is not "Gargantuan"; out of every hundred smutty books and stories dubbed Rabelaisian, one or two may have a tithe of the wit necessary to deserve the epithet. For the benefit of poets one may add that all that's villainous is not Villon.

Every travel book is not an "Odyssey" any more than every hack is a Homer.

Not every diarist is a Marie Bashkirtseff, although he or she is certain to be called so in nine out of ten metropolitan reviews. The skirts of Bashkirtseff have covered more sinners than charity itself.

Turning to the illustrious names of our own time and place we conclude:

All that's banal is not Brisbane,
All that's goody-good's not Guest,
All that's Barton is not biblical,
All that's Rogers is not jest.

Of James Stephens

The little cupids of Pompeian wall painting, those smiths, fullers, vintners and what not, always seemed to us the most seductive little artisans in the world. But that was before we met the leprechaun, or fairy shoemaker, in James Stephens' *Crock of Gold.*

"He had all the pegs in his mouth, which gave him a wide-faced jolly expression, and according as a peg was wanted he blew it into his hand and hit it twice with his

hammer, and then he blew another peg, and he always hit the peg with the right end uppermost, and never had to hit it more than twice. He was a person well worth watching."

Now this surely is the very figurine of fun, the demon of deftness; one never tires of watching the performance. Stephens is charming in his Lewis Carroll vein of solemn inconsequential nonsense, skittering across the surface of sense and leaving ripples of laughter. He has the rare gift of impishness. His pen is a wand that makes sober, decent words gambol. He writes for children and elders. There is much for both in *The Crock of Gold*. If you are hopelessly grown up, if you can't be fooled with fairies, then look at *Here are Ladies*, a collection of short stories, sparkling with wit and loaded with mature philosophy. For instance:

"Nothing makes a man feel better than telling his employer that he and his job can go bark at one another. It is the dream of a great many folk, and were it not for the glamour of that idea most people would commit suicide through sheer disgust."

Note for a Handbook on Criticism

In writing criticism the critic must choose one of two positions before he sets pen to paper. He may assume that the reader knows nothing or that he knows everything. The middle ground is untenable.

Few critics care to defend the first of these positions. It requires too much of them. Assuming that the reader is honestly and inquiringly ignorant, the critic must formulate his own ideas with definiteness, clarify and strain his style, pick concrete and homely illustrations and assert nothing that he cannot and does not prove. The assump-

tion is ungrateful for the critic and uncomplimentary to the reader.

Nothing could be more convenient to the critic and more flattering to his public than the fiction of the omniscient reader. Assume that the reader has read everything and knows everybody and he will think shame to question your most obscure references. You are automatically released from the need of explanation or proof. If you are writing on the eminent Pole, Wladislaw Reymont, liken him to the still more eminent Pole Stephen Zeromski (who has not yet been translated into English). They may be as like as two peas in a pod or they may be poles apart, but by the time the Borzoi press gets around to presenting Zeromski in the vernacular the reader will have forgotten what you said.

All really imposing criticism is posited on two principles, the fiction of the omniscient reader and the rule *ignotum pro ignoto*. Never explain the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, but in terms of the less familiar. It is impressive to liken a little known writer to a still less known one, but it is a critical knockout to compare him to some unheard-of-artist or musician. For instance:

"Morand, indeed, is as distinctive in a short story as Laurencin in a picture. You could no more mistake one than you could the other. I often reflect that if I were marooned on a desert island and a painting of Marie's were to come floating down at my feet, I should recognize it instantly without any signature. Who would not?"

Echo answers Who? What reader would confess himself such a dolt, such a dumbbell, such an oilcan as not to recognize an unsigned oil of Marie Laurencin's even if it came floating up to him on a desert island, pickled in the brine and bleached by the suns of all the seven seas?

The Essay, Ancient and Modern

The art of Charles Lamb lay in writing big essays about little things. The art of Dr. Frank Crane and Dr. Glenn Frank lies in writing little essays about big things. We imagine Elia would have muffed the job of saving western civilization in ten paragraphs and either of the Drs. Frank no doubt would have trouble writing ten pages without apple sauce.

A New "Section house"

What this country needs is a sectional or unit block system, similar to that of the sectional bookcase. Then, as one's fortune or family increased, one could add sections; as they diminished he could sell sections to the junk man.

Animism in Advertising

Among interesting signs of the times one notes an advertising trend to what religionists call animism—that is to say, the attributing of human qualities to inanimate objects. Thus you will find in the ads "clever" blouses, "jaunty" snugglers, "Authoritative" gowns, metal lamps "of fine dignity" and "personalized" stationery. We seize on a few examples from newspapers at our elbow; no doubt many others could be collected.

Maybe the ad men merely feel that the appropriate adjectives for lamps have been whipped to death and must be relieved with fresh cannon fodder. More likely, since our ad men are subtle persons and well posted on each newest wrinkle, they are taking a leaf from the Freudian psychology, and playing up to the suppressed desires of customers. The flapper with a secret sense of dullness will reach out after a "clever" blouse. Poor Mr. Henpeck, subconsciously aware of his colorless personality, will eagerly

supplement himself with "personalized" stationery. The cut-up, subliminally sensing his undignified conduct and appearance, will unfailingly fall for a metal lamp "of fine dignity." And so forth and so on.

Since advertising is the greatest present force in molding our language, it will be interesting to see what comes of this animistic tendency. In time, no doubt, the transfer of human adjectives will become complete, and a sort of reverse process may begin. It will be said that a girl is as clever as a lamp-post, that a business man has the personality of a letter head. None of these expressions sounds exactly complimentary at present, but give the ad man his head and he will make them so.

Peeps at Portugal

Portugal is again reported on the brink of revolution, a state which seems as nearly chronic in Portugal as anywhere in the world. We think of Portugal as a toy country, a sort of mechanical toy or perpetual commotion machine, always busy with its revolutions except when it is winding itself up. The wonderful thing about Portugal is that revolution never really changes anything; the Portuguese seem to have solved the problem of revolution without evolution.

Most of our impressions of Portugal derive from a very short but very delightful chapter in a book called *Campaigns and Intervals*, by Lieut. Jean Giraudoux. The first thing this charming Frenchman noticed in Lisbon was the parrots, one hanging above every door, calling out the numbers. It was hot, so hot that all the dogs were sneezing. The city officials were driving their motors at terrific speed down the Avenida, zig-zagging around the lamp-posts; speed laws do not apply to city officials in Lisbon. Society was collected in front of the Green Hat club and all the watch-

makers in Lisbon had swarmed out of their black-façaded shops with gray-blue borders and were wigwagging to the man who was turning the hands of the town clock from 11 to noon. Daylight saving was just ending for the year and this is one of the most important revolutions on the social calendar in Lisbon.

Lieut. Giraudoux leaned on the balustrade of the Tagus and observed the Vasco di Gama, the admiral's cruiser, "whose officers are forbidden to appear in Lisbon except on horseback"—the original horse marines, one conjectures. A little later Lieut. Jean traveled to the town of Evora, "where young chimpanzees are taken to board for they die off everywhere else in Europe."

Since reading all these and many more fine things about Portugal we have never been able to enjoy comic opera. It doesn't seem like the real thing somehow.

All stupid imitations for the footlights only plague us;
We want to go to Portugal, to Lisbon on the Tagus,
To see the city fathers in their automobiles zigzagging,
To see wise watchmakers in their overalls out wigwagging;
We want a pass to Portugal to pipe the chimpanzees
Who wine and dine each winter at exclusive hostelries.

Reports of revolutions in Portugal always alarm us slightly, for some day a revolution might actually change something and we want to see Portugal exactly as our favorite traveler has described it for us.

In Praise of Puns

The pun has been much maligned and nobly defended. Within reason we believe that wit's arsenal contains no sharper instrument. Of course we would not insist that a humorous journal should be a mere paper of puns, but there is no finer sport than taking a little poem and using

it for a puncushion. For sticking puns into there is nothing better than translations, especially translations from the dead languages. A translation suffers less from punpricking and if it does suffer you may reflect that after all it is not your own flesh and blood that you are torturing. For today's practice we take a poem by Martial, a poem about a wooden scarecrow, the most insensitive sort of thing to pun upon:

A Wood God

Martial 8:40

No garden here you watch, no wealthy vines;
Your beat, Priapus, is a barren wood,
Whence you were hewn, the timber of whose pines
May yet beget a dozen gods as good.
We make you cop to guard this precious corpse
To keep the thug without our treasured thicket,
To thwack the thief that impudently stops
While you are watching at this woodsy wicket.
Warden, protect these pines from thievish call;
We billet thee to keep our wood from dwindling,
If billets fail us, grate will be thy fall.
Ingrate, thou shalt be promptly fired—for kindling!

History in Advertising

Advertising men are under fire from the United States Daughters of 1812 for making free with the national Hall of Fame. The Daughters feel their filial respect for the great men of America in danger of dwindling if copy writers continue to associate great names with commercial products. They object to the use of George Washington's name in connection with a brand of coffee, to making Abraham Lincoln the patron saint of an ax manufacturer and to associating Molly Pitcher with silk underclothing.

It is always well to keep a wary eye on the ad men, but their use of history seems legitimate as long as they regard the facts and the proprieties. If George Washington were annexed by a hardware firm it would perpetuate a falsehood. On the other hand, an Abe Lincoln ax helps preserve the fine railsplitter tradition. A Paul Revere alarm clock or a Ben Franklin kite would be proper and helpful applications of history. On the other hand, Molly Pitcher silk underwear creates a false Pitcher in the reader's mind and is as untrue to Molly's place in history as a Jefferson Davis union suit would be to the great secessionist.

Truth and tact must guide the copy writers in their applications of history. For example, it might be truthful, but it would not be tactful, for a clothing manufacturer to put out a line of George Harvey knee pants. But within these limitations we feel that the ad men should be encouraged to make as free with history as H. G. Wells himself.

Zero in Scientific Achievement

"Squashes have just been successfully grown from seeds that were 50 years old."—Press Report.

Our contempt for the persons who would treasure squash seeds for fifty years is exceeded only by our hatred for the enemy to society who ventures to plant and cultivate them.

The Artistic Conscience

Not long ago Henry Kitchell Webster, the Evanston novelist, mentioned to us that he had just made the round trip to California without stopping over.

"Why that long, tedious ride for nothing?" we asked.

"It wasn't for nothing," said Mr. Webster. "I was planning a mystery to take place in a Pullman during a trans-

continental trip and I needed to get the right atmosphere."

We thought this the height of conscientiousness even for an Evanston novelist, but it seems it wasn't. Evanston sleuths have just caught the burglar who has pillaged a number of homes lately. He proves to be a successful writer of crime stories for the magazines, who was trying out a few new notions before putting them on paper.

The reason why Evanston leads the west in literature is clear. Her authors, from novelists to second-story writers, are conscientious. They write only what they know from experience. They would rather burgle than bungle a detective story. Incidentally, we are fighting shy of Edwin Balmer of Evanston. He is said to be plotting a murder story.

Columbus Casts Off.

(*As an up-to-date feature story.*)

Mrs. Christopher Columbus was chattering in a carefree fashion. Queen Isabella, wearing all the famous jewels alleged to have been pawned to finance the expedition, was vivacious and showed no sign of fear.

"I'm not a bit scared, never have been, never will be about Chris and any voyage he's on," Mrs. Columbus said. "I think it's marvelous that he's going and that they're away at last. That's what I really mean, too."

Isabella was also happy, confident. She cut a dazzling figure as old Sol's early rays coruscated on the famous crown jewels.

"Well, looks like they're going, 'Bella'," said Mrs. Columbus, touching the queen's arm gently. They looked at each other for a second and then broke into happy giggles.

"It's wonderful, isn't it?" said Mrs. Columbus.

"It certainly is," replied Isabella.

(The *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria* fade into the mists of dawn.)

"Will you follow Chris to America?" asked the correspondent of the *Barcelona Bazoo*.

"Will a duck swim? I sail on the next caravel!" was Mrs. Columbus' confident comeback.

Isabella looked inquiringly at King Ferdinand, who shook his head gently but firmly.

A Short Account of a Sojourn Among the Manhattan Islanders.

The Manhattan islanders work in skyscrapers and live in boroughs named after famous cocktails. They are shot to and from their work in tubes. They take their food in automats, their drink in speak easies, and their ideas in tabloids. Their language is a mixed argot of uncertain origin; inquiries are met with the reply "Dun't esk."

The chief product of the Manhattan islanders is publicity, which they exchange with natives of the hinterland for butter and eggs. Their dealings with the hinterlanders are carried on chiefly in the dollar-sign language, in which they are very proficient.

The born Manhattan islanders, of which there are said to be a few, are descended from the Dutch and Tammany Indians with a small infusion of Anglo-Saxon blood. Immigrants from the hinterland are quickly naturalized and form a large element in the population. It is the boast of these newcomers that they are more Manhattanese than the born islanders. The homes of the first families are on 5th Avenue and the homes of the last families on 192nd Street or farther out.

Visitors among the Manhattan islanders are treated kindly and often to Scotch and other synthetic beverages on the theory that the tighter they get the looser they will be

with their money. Visitors are shown Wall Street, Broadway, Texas Guinan's, and Grant's tomb, of which the last is the most inexpensive point of interest.

Author, Ahoy!

William McFee, the only first-class practicing marine engineer who is also a first-class practicing novelist, arrived in Chicago the other afternoon on a trip into the middle west. Trailing over to his hotel in the wake of the literary editor, we found McFee a big, bluff nautical looking Englishman with bright blue eyes and a cheerful, open manner. He promptly broke all records for visiting Englishmen by refusing to give his impressions of Chicago after three hours' experience. "It wouldn't be fair," he said. Outside of this canny reticence, McFee talked freely and with a fine salt wit, on shoes and ships and sealing wax and cabbages and kings.

Then and at the dinner for him given by Harry Maule Mr. McFee preferred to discuss his steamer and the sea rather than his books. To illustrate the eternal rivalry of the bridge and the engine room he told one story which will always stick with us. A certain captain and his chief engineer, tired of endlessly debating which the ship could the more easily dispense with, decided to swap places for a day. The chief ascended to the bridge and the skipper dived into the engine room. After a couple of hours at the most, the captain suddenly appeared on deck covered with oil and soot, bruised as to one eye and generally the worse for wear.

"Chief!" he called, wildly beckoning with a monkey wrench. You'll have to come down here at once. I can't seem to make her go."

"Of course you can't," said the chief, calmly removing his pipe from his mouth. "She's ashore."

William McFee is the first author we have met who left us even more interested in his books than we were before, and that without mentioning them at all. Decidedly there is an advantage even to an able novelist in being also an able seaman with a fondness for talking that peculiarly fascinating kind of shop.

Human Nature is So Conservative.

"Vast multitudes of human beings continue to live on wheat and rice simply because their fathers did so."—Dr. Frank Crane.

For the matter of that, the only reason most of us live at all is because our fathers did so.

Modesty and Literary Genius

"I think," says Bobby Jones' literary collaborator, "that he is going to do a very fine bunch of articles. He is a much better writer than he thinks he is."

Bobby's modesty is engaging, but we fear it bodes ill for his success as a writer. When Sinclair Lewis was in the first flush of his *Main Street* success an anonymous article appeared in the Bookman charging him with extreme and offensive egocentricity, which is the lit'ry lingo for what in vulgar parlance is known as a swelled head. Mr. Lewis was touched to the quick by the article. He showed it to us, asking plaintively, "Am I egotistical and, if I am egotistical, don't I need it in my businss?"

We honestly agreed that he needed it in his business. There is no business that requires more egotism than the writing game. If a writer doesn't know that he is good how will he get by the office boys and secretaries, not to mention the editors and publishers?

Another distinguished writing man, Joseph Hergesheimer, once spoke to us with delightful candor on this topic. "A

first-rate writer," he said, "never wants to meet other first-rate writers. When he sees a first-class piece of work all he says is 'Why the h—l didn't I think of that first?' All a first-class man wants is a megaphone, a spotlight and a reflector."

The Mumble-Jumble School of Wuxtry Paper Selling

James Joyce, Gertrude Stein and other professional obscurantists have a disciple in the Chicago newsboy who writes vox pop: "I have found it good advertising to stir the inquisitive mind of the public by making my words indistinguishable." If there's no good murder in the paper a smart newsy can always murder the English language.

Wanted: Bachelors of Matrimony.

Prof. Todd of the sociology department of Northwestern University demands that his institution offer courses in matrimony. Only so, he thinks, can the rising tide of divorce be stemmed.

We take it that Prof. Todd is not proposing real practice courses, but merely theory of marriage, and in no field is theory more worthless. The marriage problem is a personal equation with two unknown quantities and its permutations and combinations are infinite.

"It isn't life that matters," says Hugh Walpole in his *Fortitude*, "but the courage you bring to it," and the same goes for matrimony. If colleges can teach courage, caution, courtesy, self-sacrifice, tolerance, thrift, and all the other homely virtues they are laying a pretty good foundation for matrimony. Special courses in psychology, sociology, etc., leading up to the degree of bacehlor of matrimony seem to us of very dubious value.

Balanced Aberrations

Examine any one of the latest cults—for example, that of the local Life Institute—and the first thing that strikes you is the scientific principle on which the thing has been constructed. The world is so full of excellent religious systems that founders of new cults need invent nothing. They have only to run over the established religions, selecting calories and vitamines till they have an absolutely nutritious and satisfying eithical program of balanced ration. The method is tremendously scientific and the product would be perfectly harmless but for the two habit-forming drugs which put the kick and the profit into quack cults. To distinguish between religious ration and aberration—analyze for cupid and cupidity.

Women and War

Lieut.-Col. Thomas Dickson, retired army chaplain, kicks on the history textbooks used in Washington schools, which contain "too much woman and too little war," in the esteemed gentleman's estimation. One history devotes fifty-two lines to Jane Addams' career and dismisses the Argonne fight in a few sentences.

This conflict is as old as history. Members of the Grecian expeditionary force complained that historians of the Trojan war devoted a ridiculous amount of space to Helen of Troy,

"The Face That Launched a Thousand Ships."

So it is with Jane Addams and the A.E.F. That "the face that launched the peace ship" should get more space in histories of the great war than the fighters of the Argonne may be absurd, but it has abundant precedent.

"War is hades," said the men who fought the Trojan war, but "war is ladies," said its singers and historians. Perhaps it amounts to the same thing in the end.

The Ship that Launched a Thousand Courtships.

"The time is not yet ripe for co-education on the high seas," declares Former Governor Henry Allen of Kansas in summing up his experience as professor of journalism on the American floating university, Ryndam. As an educational institution it seems that the Ryndam has not competed successfully with the United States navy, and the fault lay with Cupid. When love came in by the gang-plank, lore went overside. The professors wasted their wisdom on the ocean air, while the students were engrossed with the larger preparation for life derived from communion with one another.

We wonder whether the work of alma mater afloat was more seriously interfered with by co-education than is the case with her sisters on terra firma. Probably not, but within the narrow campus of a sea-going university the professors could not shut their eyes to the social activities.

"Superior Judges Criticized by Efficiency Man."—Headline.

If there is anything busier than the proverbial one-armed paper hanger with the hives it should be an efficiency man in legal circles.

Art and Experience.

We often wonder whether a writer really profits by deep first-hand acquaintance with his material. Herman Melville, who had only played around the edges of his subject, did incomparably the greatest story of the whale, while Jonah, an insider, if ever there was one, left only a short account, disappointing to curious ictheologians. It is interesting to surmise the effect on Melville had he been privileged to probe the slums of Leviathan as Jonah did. He might,

of course, have made his Moby Dick into a novel of sordid realism, the sort of thing that would be privately printed and advertised as "A Whale of a Novel." But it is our idea that Jonah's experience would have sickened Melville's romantic soul. Rather than icthyanalyze the whale, we believe Melville would have turned round and idealized the shrimp or the sardine.

A Chestnut for Critics.

Philoxenus, after having been sent to the quarries by Dionysius of Syracuse for criticizing the tyrant's poetry, was given another chance. After reading a few lines he turned away silently. "Where are you going?" asked Dionysius. "Back to the quarries," said Philoxenus.

An Essay on Executives.

The chief requisite of an executive is push, a quality measured by push buttons. An executive is known by the number of push buttons on his desk. There are one-button, two-button, three, four, five and even six-button executives. When an executive commands a battery of six or more push buttons he is a big executive. Occasionally, of course, you will find a one-button mind in a six-button job, but that makes no difference. He has only to push the buttons and expert subordinates will solve his problems for him. A six-button executive always has plenty of two and three-button men under him. So long as a big executive knows his buttons he need know little else.

Broadening Effects of Travel

Speaking of sex instruction, we see by the *Brooklyn Eagle* that Dr. R. Sparck, the Danish biologist, has just wound up an investigation into the cause of sex changes in oysters. "Sex changes could be obtained almost hourly," concludes

Dr. Sparck, 'if oysters could stand immersion in varying degrees of heat or were able to travel about from one latitude to another."

Dr. Sparck's conclusions are interesting from two angles: first as showing how much more versatile the oyster is than the lobster. When a lobster gets into hot water he merely changes color, while as for your oyster, presto! he (or she) changes sex entirely. Then there is the even more curious fact, attested by Dr. Sparck, and by Dr. Norton of the British Marine Biological association, that whereas the leopard cannot even change his spots, the oyster can change sex by traveling from one spot to another. One can imagine a female oyster roguishly quoting to her mate the lines of Edna St. Vincent Millay:

"The fabric of my faithful love
No power shall dim or ravel,
Whilst I stay here—but oh, my dear,
If I should ever travel!

Charges of writing "reminiscent" verse are being bandied about more and more freely among our poets. "On the field of battle," said Napoleon, "the happiest inspiration is often a recollection." Can it be that the poets are developing the Napoleonic complex?

What with most advertising men writing a little, and most writing men advertising a good deal, it occurs to us that it's getting pretty hard to tell the two apart.

One notes in the various literary reviews lately a kind of epidemic of articles on "good and bad criticism," "how to write reviews," etc. Our lit'ry editors hardly need to teach the public how to write reviews. How to read 'em is the real problem.

The best thing in Aldous Huxley's collection, *The Young Archimedes*, is the story called *My Uncle Spencer*, recollections of an English schoolboy's vacations in Flanders, autobiographical, we suppose. Huxley paints Flemish life and character with the gusto of an old master. He can be pathetic, philosophical, and in the next breath impish, with irresistible drollery, on what he calls "the innocent coprophily" of the Flemings as shown in their confectionary shops during festal seasons, or, one may add, less innocently in the bookshops, in the novels of Huysmann.

Aldous Huxley is what our Mr. Van Vechten would like to be. His sound aesthetics make 5 and 10 cent store trumpery out of Van Vechten's notions on art and decoration. His deft diablerie shows up Van Vechten's "daring" as raw breaks of the Greenwich village cup-up. Neat but not nifty, naughty but not nasty, Aldous Huxley perpetuates the Horatian *simplex munditiis* in English prose style.

Balisand is a rarely beautiful book, the finest thing, we feel, that Joseph Hergesheimer has done. The critics have racked their brains for similes to suggest its savor and have adduced some mighty pretty comparisons. What *Balisand* must suggest to us is an old southern fruit cake—rich, compact and fragrant, the kind we used to keep for years wrapped in yellowing cloths and wet from time to time with brandy. *Balisand* has that richness, that body and exactly that haunting fragrance.

We should have known Maxwell Bodenheim was dangerous when he sat with such a lean and hungry look watching the loaded porringers at Schlogl's. "Bogey's" comment comes in the *Mercury* as an attack on literary "Groups" and "Schools." It is a well written and largely truthful paper. But we still think that the best comment

on "Home-town" cliques was penned by Lucian, the Syrian satirist, in the second century A. D., or, as literature is now reckoned, the eighteenth century B.B. (before Bodenheim). Twitting the local boosters of the "Milesian school, "Lucian makes one of them declaim that Homer was a rotten writer because he wrote two enormous poems of twenty-four books each and never mentioned his home town once.

Jonah and the Whale

(If Jonah had been William Beebe, the stylistic naturalist.)

I had gone probably forty leagues down the cetacean's gullet when it opened into the central antrum or "tummy" of the monster, a commodious room of some fifty fathoms by thirty. I sat down on my deck chair which had been washed along with me, removed my diving helmet, and with water-wrinkled fingers began to scrawl damp notes on my new surroundings.

The apartment was lighted with phosphorescent protozoans and tastefully draped with algae of the classes Chlorophyceaee and Phyophyceae. A gentle vibration from the whale's extremely mobile caudal preduncle told me that my habitat was in motion, but otherwise I might have thought myself in the exquisitely finished reception hall of some metropolitan hostelry.

I was not alone in my grandeur. A pool of brine in the center of the whale's rotunda was alive with finny transients who had arrived at the same time as I. There were gorgeous yellow sunfish and pallid moonfish. Quaint crabs (Decapoda and Brachyura) sidling here and there imparted a touch of comedy to the scene. From time to time the gullet would open to admit new guests, of which I particularly remarked a whole school of angel fishes, like coryphees in their rainbow hues, and a rakish looking shark who was eyed coquettishly by the angel fishes.

So much I saw before, to my surprise and regret, the phenomenon of regurgitation set in. The gentle vibration of the whale's tail stopped and I could feel that he was considering something. Suddenly a violent churning of his sides commenced and all was confusion. With incredible swiftness I was ejected the way I had come, and found myself on the sea surface clutching my copy in one hand and swimming strongly. The storm, which had been so violent when I submerged, had subsided. The crew of the Arcturus hailed me with cheerful cries and hastened to let down a ladder. As I clambered over the bulwarks the first to congratulate me was little David, the son of my good publishers: "Gee, Uncle Jonah!" he cried, "I thought that ole whale had got you!"

Numbers we should like to see added to the *To-day and To-morrow Series* are:

Charon or the Future of Navigation.
Cerberus or the Future of the Hot Dog.
Pandora or the Future of the Talking Machine.
Atlas or the Future of Uplift.
Procrustes or the Future of Surgery.

An impressive thing about the creative mind is its power to reverse the order of nature. For instance, see Sherwood Anderson, who in his autobiography has begotten a father in his own image.

The other day a poet who has hitherto contributed only to the small art-for-art's sake magazines, showed us his first paid poem in a popular periodical. "It's the first time," he said, with a throb of joy in his voice, "that I have ever been run next to pure advertising matter."

Pessimists about modern literature have overlooked one field in which present-day writers easily excel the ancients. We refer to the department of prophecy. "Even the powerful mind of Dr. Johnson seemed foiled by futility," wrote Boswell. Compare the prophetic impotence of the otherwise powerful Johnson with any of a dozen modern prophets and particularly with Arthur Brisbane on future developments in the air. Arthur's worst enemies cannot say that he is foiled by futurity.

The present interest in ballads, "blues," folk songs, folk stories and other primitive "culture" is something we share in part but not altogether. It seems to us that a good deal of junk is being collected and published along with the good stuff. Savages are no more eager for the brass wire, glass beads, zinc mirrors and other trumpery of civilized traders than some sophisticates for anything that smacks of the primitive.

A new kind of author peculiar to this day and age is the collaborator who helps big business men write their autobiographies. A sort of literary valet, he lays out his employer's public wear, expresses his opinions, and polishes his periods for him. To the old-fashioned valet no man was a hero, but all men with upward of $10,000,000 are heroes to the literary valet.

When an English novelist finds it necessary to introduce an American character he invents jargon that is certainly not English and which must therefor be American, putting the words "wawl," "I reckon," or "I calculate," to carry absolute conviction to his readers. The English idea of every-day speech in this country dates back to the dialect of Mark Twain and Artemus Ward. It may be that the vogue

of Anita Loos and Ring Lardner in England will freshen up John Bull's notion of Uncle Sam's idiom, and for the next twenty-five years all American men and women in English fiction will talk like Lorelei Lee and Jack Keefe.

We have looked in vain to find any single word as insulting to a book as the epithet "charade" used of a play by our dramatic critics.

It may be worth while to consider the change in Christian ideas from Thomas à Kempis' *Imitatio Christi* to Bruce Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows*. The former teaches us to be like Christ, the latter that Christ was like us, an immense simplification of the spiritual life and a flattering unction for the soul.

The practice of using names of living people in current novels is not without danger. It is rumored that two New York novelists and a columnist have filed suit against Carl Van Vechten for discrimination in failing to mention them in his novels while giving good notices to less deserving contemporaries.

The title story in Ben Hecht's *Broken Necks* is one of the most powerful pieces of writing we have ever read anywhere. Probably it will be called journalistic. Hangings are a notoriously journalistic subject and most reporters have had their fling at one. Ben Hecht, however, is not a mere police reporter but a connoisseur of hangings. The essence of a long attendance on such ceremonials is distilled in this one grim description that says not a word too much and yet leaves nothing to be said. It has pity, horror, irony and aloofness. In short, *Broken Necks* seems to us a tremendous argument against capital punishment without a word of propaganda.

The biblical prophets and martyrs were not alone in being "translated to a higher sphere." Many modern French, German and Russian writers translated into English have attained a repute incomprehensible to their fellow countrymen.

After reading a column and a half by our learned colleague, Dr. Llewellyn Jones, on what Louis Untermeyer doesn't know about metrics, it occurred to us that Dr. Jones will go thundering down in history as the man that put the prose into prosody.

One good rule for critics is never laud a man you have lunched with (if the public has seen you lunching together). Gratitude is the worst vice of critics. Another safe rule is never slam a man who has rejected your manuscripts, however meritorious they were. *De gustibus non disputandum.*

Keats discovering Chapman's *Homer* was nothing to our own Frederick Donaghey opening Thomas Beer's *Mauve Decade* for the first time:

> No tryst so solemn and so sweet
> As when two antiquarians meet
> And measure over and again
> Their memories of way back when,
> Or lovingly and like a brother
> Pick little flaws in one another.

Osbert Sitwell, lecturing around New York, created a sensation, according to Harry Hansen, by his pronunciation of the word "poetry," which sounded exactly like a cross between pewter and persimmons. One might add that this is exactly the way the Sitwells' poetry reads.

Button Gwinnett's success should be a lesson to authors to sign their name to one great piece of work and stop there.

It has never occurred to us to criticize Conan Doyle's mental gyrations since the goblins got him. A man has a right to make a fool of himself in his own way, and we owe Sir A. Conan Doyle too much pure entertainment to be critical of him, anyhow.

Nevertheless, we have now a bone to pick with the author of *Sherlock Holmes* and *The Lost World*. In his novel *The Land of the Mist*, he takes those fine, sane, stalwart Englishmen, Prof. Challenger and Lord Roxton, and steers them into spiritualism. An author may change his own character as he pleases, but he has no right to change the characters that he has set down once for all in his novels. As well make a crook out of Sherlock Holmes as quacks or dupes out of Prof. Challenger and Lord Roxton.

A person that we have always wanted to see is the man who howls, screams, splits his side and rolls on the floor in fits and spasms of mirth over humorous books. Reviewers are always claiming to have done these things, but years of careful observation of literary people reading the best current humor have not rewarded us with a single authentic instance.

One is tempted to define an original creative genius as a "writer who has not written a book on Jesus, George Washington, or Abraham Lincoln."

We cannot read modern biography without occasionally wondering what the solemn subjects would have thought of their bright young biographers. Herbert Gorman, for in-

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stance, in his life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, consistently calls his hero "Henry." We are glad he didn't make it "Hank," but even "Henry" seems a bit familiar. The great Mr. Longfellow might, in a moment of kindly condescension, have said, "Call me Henry!" to Mr. Gorman, but we doubt it. It is a characteristic of our young biographers that they are more familiar with great men than the chosen familiars and intimates of these great men in their life times. Consider how standoffish Dr. Johnson was with Bozzy, who managed to keep a respectful distance, and still turn out a pretty good life of Johnson.

The speed with which the new biography can be turned out is astounding until one reflects that little or no original research is required. The new-fashioned biographer has only to take one of the numerous old-fashioned biographies and re-upholster it. Perhaps a more accurate expression would be to knock the stuffings out of it.

We have sometimes felt the lack of candor in the literary supplements and the reason for this was confidentially imparted to us the other day by a well-known New York critic. "We don't speak harshly of a book," said our informant, "even when it is bad. We discover obscure merits in it."

Booth Tarkington's *The Plutocrat* reminds one very much of Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*. Both are glorified guide books. Both show blatantly ignorant Americans braying and tramping amid the historic monuments of Europe. Each author justifies his hero, Twain on the ground that art is a fake and history the bunk, and Tarkington on the ground that a big, strong man with a heart of gold and a pocketful of the same is justified in anything.

Tarkington is more suave than Twain, and has more cultural consciousness, but Mark was louder and funnier and his position seems to us more easily defensible.

The main reason why poetry is in eclipse in America to-day is because so many of our best poets are going into prose for the money there is in it. Poetry is young ambition's ladder these days, the quickest and easiest way to win a reputation and make a market for the novels, short stories or what not to which the poet will apply his ripened powers. A brief flutter in verse before he settles down to write for a living is all the practical American poet of to-day can allow himself. His evolution is from butterfly to grub-worm.

Authors who in recent novels have resorted to the automobile to dispatch superfluous characters now include Michael Arlen, Frank Swinnerton, E. M. Delafield, Arnold Bennett and Warwick Deeping. The death tolls of autos in fiction is even more shocking than in real life. The old-fashioned *deus ex machina* now drives a high-power car.

London *Punch* has some trouble in understanding Joseph Hergesheimer's *From an Old House*. The old house doesn't seem particularly old or choice to an English eye. "Most English villages," says Mr. Punch, "boast a vicarage or a farm house or two on the same Georgian lines." In the same spirit Nevinson wrote in his *Good-bye America*: "Good-bye to the house that is labeled 'One Hundred Years Old,' for the amazement of mortality."

Nevertheless Mr. Hergesheimer's old house and his collection of old bottles has the charm of antiquity for us and for most other Americans. Our English cousins should remember that America is a precocious country where things

age faster than ever in the world before. Our houses and skyscrapers are out of date in a decade. Our books are dead in a season. Our liquors are aged over-night and a bottle of 1917 is a Methuselah of beverages. Our women are grandmothers at 40 and flappers at 50.

There is a relativity of time as well as space, and American progress has created new standards of antiquity. It takes things a long time to get old in lands where time stands still, but not in the U. S. A.

Edna St. Vincent Millay's *The King's Henchman* is the first grand opera not written in vers libretto. The one thing worse than vers libre is vers libretto.

We believe that most child-poets write real poetry, but the gift seldom survives the loss of their childish naïveté. Adapting the weather proverb, "write before seven, trite by eleven" would sum up the history of most child poets.

Messrs. Werner, Dibble and Seitz between them have found many good qualities in Brigham Young, yet in none of the three lives do we find mention of his most eminent virtue. Brigham was faithful to his wives.

Gertrude Stein's idea of a dispassionate critique is to decline the personal pronouns. When moved to the very depths she will conjugate the strong verbs.

A lady who was brought up with Sherwood Anderson in the town that may be called Winesburg tells us that she had the pleasure of lending Sherwood the Elsie books, and that he read them all one after another. There is a nice problem for some student of literary influences in tracing

the influence of the Elsie books on the novels of Sherwood Anderson.

A nifty is an epigram in low company.

Reading a page of book reviews by New York school children in the *Literary Review*, we find the attitude of elder critics most engagingly parodied. Here, for instance, is a sixth-grade girl striking the exact pose of an intellectual with a Harold Bell Wright novel:

"I did not like the book because it was for younger children, but I think any fourth-grade child would enjoy it."

When this little girl grows up and becomes a full-fledged critic, instead of "fourth-grade child," she will say "moron," or "Babbitt." Her words will not be so polite nor her snobbery so innocent, but her thought will be the same.

Collectors of George Moore have our sympathy. When they think they have a final definitive edition of a Moore opus Mr. Moore rewrites and reissues it with a new preface and other accessories. Some arrangement, it seems, should be made by which one could turn in one's old Moore on the new model.

Granting that the English write better crime stories than we do, what is the cause? We have the raw material, rawer every day. Doubtless this very commonness of murder in America explains the failure of our writers. For artistic purposes it does not suffice for a murder to be cruel; it must be unusual and seem so to the chronicler. As for the psychology of murder, no wonder our authors cannot take it seriously. Our alienists have made it utterly ridiculous.

The status of murder in America resembles that of war in the Roman empire; with our lethal instruments of precision and our legal instruments of evasion we have, as Gibbon put it, exalted murder into an art and degraded it into a trade. Safe, efficient and commercialized murder loses its appeal to the imagination. Crime must be risky for the criminal if it is to be romantic for the reader. To have more and better crime stories we must have fewer and better criminals.

This may or may not determine Dorothy Parker's place in literature, but we have placed her *Enough Rope* between Shakespeare and Mother Goose on the shelf which holds our column library, the few, the immortal books which offer real first aid and inspiration to a hard-pressed columnist.

An artistic phenomenon that might reward study is the rejuvenating effect on an author of changing publishers. We note in the fall announcements that two well-known novelists who recently took unto themselves new publishers have promptly produced masterpieces, books totally different from and quite overshadowing anything they have hitherto accomplished.

Making poetry pay in this country is a grave problem. Probably the only people who have solved it are the columnists, and they don't make it pay the poets.

A word that has for a long time teased and puzzled us is "Rabelaisian," as used in the reviews. Having studiously read all the books that the reviewers said were "Rabelaisian" we found ourself still baffled. All the books were different from one another and none of them was very

much. Suddenly we conceived the brilliant notion that one might possibly find out what Rabelaisian meant by reading Rabelais.

For a couple of weeks now we have been plowing through Gargantua and Pantagruel. And still we don't know what the reviewers mean by Rabelaisian. We find a lot of smut that is not witty and a lot of wit that is not smutty, but the two are seldom combined as the reviewers seem to think. Can it be that our critical guides have never read Rabelais? The smut is mostly of the humorless sort that farm hands guffaw at. The wit is either biting satire or skyscraping exaggeration. In one sense Frank Harris' autobiography, is the most Rabelaisian work published lately, in another and more creditable sense Paul Bunyan deserves that title. Persons who are sincerely amused by the child-like inventions of Paul Bunyan should laugh themselves to death at the full grown mendacity of Gargantua and Pantagruel. In still another sense, Mr. H. L. Mencken is our most expert Rabelaisian. To cuss politely and yet convincingly is no small achievement. Yet even Mr. Mencken's most ardent enemies will admit that he has achieved it.

Staggering erudition, advanced skepticism and fertile invention we find in Rabelais, but no mellow humor. It seems to us that he has been vastly improved upon by his imitators, Swift, Sterne and others. If every reviewer could be compelled to read all of Rabelais, we dare say that would be the finish of the word Rabelaisian. We are only half through the second volume, and this will be positively our last mention of the great satirist.

Anthologists have been under hot fire lately as men of paste and scissors who, having no creative life of their own, suck sustenance from the already too poorly nourished corpus of poets and short-story writers.

Such criticism is just, no doubt, for many petty grafters in the anthology field, but not for conscientious compilers like Burton Stevenson. His collection includes not only good selections from our recognized laureates but a host of fine single poems by little known poets that would otherwise have passed unnoticed.

Not every poet can have a pyramid of his own. Some must be content to have their poetic remains modestly pigeon-holed for posterity in a columbarium or "dove-cote," as Roman undertakers termed their co-operative Westminster Abbeys.

Word comes, from no less an authority than Pascal Covici that *The King of the Black Isles* is about to go into limp leather. Going into limp leather is a solemn and irrevocable step comparable only to taking the veil. On which the late Bert Leston Taylor commented that going into limp leather is a serious step for an author, but when he goes into ooze leather he is "practically finis." Some publishers hold that ooze is all right for the author who can take it or leave it alone. We trust that the King will let it alone.

In the last few years we have systematically weeded out our library, throwing out the frivolous novels and keeping the serious travel books, memoirs, biographies and autobiographies. And it strikes us as we contemplate the few but enormous volumes which now fill our shelves that the survival of the fattest has been our rule.

Current literature may be largely divided into the high hokum, the middle and the low, to which may be added the middle west, if you are so disposed.

The deuce about being a professor is this: You hate the classics because you have had to teach them and you hate the moderns because you have never learned them.

One of the amazing things about that charming book *Troubadour* is the number of little magazines Alfred Kreymborg confesses to having started. There does not seem to have been a year of his creative life when he was not either expecting, or publishing, or burying a little magazine. No sooner was *The Etaoin* laid to rest than *The Shrdlu* came hopefully into the world, *und so weiter*. Kreymborg had a finger in every bit of pi produced by the new poetry.

The soporific influence of the "tired business man" on American art has been sufficiently emphasized. Now Mr. Edward Bok has set out to show that what the tired business man has done the retired business man can undo. Edward Bok the man comes right out and criticizes the taste of Edward Bok the editor. We like Mr. Bok's message, and we applaud his discretion in retiring when he did. For a popular editor, when introspection sets in, the age of retirement is indicated.

Critics are attacked for giving attention to wayward and wicked novelists while so many sweet, clean books await review. But surely the sinners are most in need of critical ministration. The pure we have always with us, as the saying goes.

Mediocrity at the altar of patriotism is transfigured like a homely bride.

In our humble opinion E. M. Hull missed a bet in not giving her *The Sons of the Sheik* the more snappy title *Twin Bedouins.*

We know a chap who says that every time he reads a new book he finds himself rereading at least a dozen old ones.

All novelists may be divided into two classes, creative and re-creative. For education, you read the former, for recreation the latter.

No doubt you have observed that for every notable book there is a single word which each new reviewer features with the pride of discovery. Learn these key-words and you have the kernel of current criticism. A word to the wise-acres is sufficient.

The good old word "criticaster" has fallen into disuse of late. But isn't it time to revive it for our broadcasting critics?

George Jean Nathan is a formidable wit and in this iconoclastic age should rank higher than he does. The trouble is, we suppose, that Mr. Nathan limits himself to dramatic criticism. Smashing matinee idols is the easiest form of iconoclasm. If Nathan ever uses his muscles on a man-size job the public may begin to take him more seriously.

The hard clear flame of the Millay muse seems to draw the lady poets of her generation like an arc light against which, mothlike, they flap their ineffectual wings in vain.

Among those who have been leading the benighted business man out of his darkness and into the realms of sweetness and light, Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach holds a prominent place. He, more than any other man, has awakened sugar kings and railroad barons to the delights of book collecting and persuaded them to take capital out of first mortgages and reinvest it in first editions.

Dr. Rosenbach's reminiscences, as written for the *Saturday Evening Post* by one Avery Strakosch, show a pardonable pride in his services to literature. "It is restful," he says, "to think of him (the American business man) in his library of an evening instead of in the first row of a crowded theater."

It is indeed restful to think of the business man in his library reading his *Wehkomaonganoo Asquam Peantogig*, being the only known copy of Richard Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, translated into the Indian languages by Apostle John Eliot, and sold to Dr. Rosenbach at the Royal Society's sale for the record price of $34,000.

If the business man is not puzzling out his *Wehkomaonganoo* from the Pequot (the original English is worth absolutely nothing) one may picture him poring over the *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* in the original wrappers, anonymously edited by Shelley and recently sold for $6,000.

We confess that we would rather sit in the bald-headed row at *Nay, Nay, Nadine* that puzzle over Pequot tracts or piece together posthumous fragments. We would just as soon read a Gideon Bible as a Gutenberg at $106,000. First edition hunting makes queer book-fellows, and the obligation to read nothing that has cost him less than $5,000 gives a man a literary diet that we shudder at. But, fortified by the approval of Dr. Rosenbach and A. Edward Newton, he is bearing up under it.

A magazine, like a railway, acquires its right of way slowly, painfully, by begging, buying, blarney and bluster. Then, its position recognized, its tracks laid across the surface of public opinion, your magazine runs on successfully, if its issues and its opinions be equally regular. If either lag behind the public taste, a magazine is apt to peter out. But the real fun comes when a magazine begins to run hog wild, forsaking all schedule and public habit with its radical opinion. Then the squawking, the kicking, the rain of limbs and feathers! Cows, chickens and old subscribers litter the right of way.

The Proof of a Poet is in His Prose

The proof of a poet, says Horace in one of his satires, lies in his vocabulary. If he is a mere versifier, rewrite his stuff minus the meters and you will have pure prose. But if he is a divinely anointed bard, do what you will with him. Pick his poems apart, destroy all semblance of meter, assemble them in what seems to you the plainest and ugliest prose order. Still the poetic words will loom and sparkle like diamonds on a dowager. The real poetic vocabulary is as "authentic" and "distinctive" as that of the cross word puzzle (with which it is in many respects identical).

It seems to us that when there is any real doubt whether a poet is a real poet we need only ask him to try a passage of pure prose. The poet born to the purple will stick out like the Ethiopian in the word pile.

The Alienist Advertises

The American Mercury—It develops your superiority complex.

The Dial—A magazine for polyglot personalities.

One Man's Fame is Another Man's Phobia

"When a man is elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters," writes the *Atlantic Monthly Press*, "one would expect him to look upon the event as the culmination of a successful life."

How differently people look at these things! Our one and only meeting with the Mencken in his hall (poetic for among the cuckoo clocks and family portraits of his three-story basement house at Baltimore) was immediately after that great calamity, the election of Joseph Hergesheimer to the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

"Hergie is done for! Hergie is done for!" keened the Lord of Baltimore, beating his breast (poetic for thumping the table with his stein of home brew).

"But scarcely anybody will know about it, Mr. Mencken," we interrupted with intent to console.

"Hergie will know it! Hergie will know it!" sobbed Mr. Mencken, unconsolable. "Henceforth he will regard himself as the custodian of the public morals, etc., etc."

He Who Runs May Read

Qualifications for turning author are more various to-day than ever before in the world's history, but the first of them is speed. A man who is quick on the typing finger will never fail of finding his publisher. The campaign biographer able to write at the drop of a hat into the ring will sell his thousands. The social satirist who can strike while the iron is hot will sell his tens of thousands.

Right, as Usual

Bernard Shaw reviewed his war record in the *Century*, through a dialogue with his standing interviewer, Archibald Henderson. The world and Shaw certainly owe a lot to

this born listener, who has made it his life work to draw Shaw out. Shaw is always sore about something and Archibald draws the soreness like a mustard plaster.

Shaw finds himself right on the war in every particular. Aristotle or George Jean Nathan or somebody has said that a fool is a man who is right at the wrong time, but Mr. Shaw would no doubt find an answer for that, too, if it were put to him. Nevertheless, it seems to us that in his insistence on treating the great war as if it were an exercise in logic, Mr. Shaw has been as wrong in his way as the patriots who regarded it as an emotional spree. A little emotion would have helped Mr. Shaw's case as much as a little logic would have helped the patriots.

Twenty years ago, when we were just a little Shavian, Shaw could dazzle and brow-beat us into thinking him right on anything, even when he revealed on the next page that he was only fooling us. We wish we could enjoy him as we did then, but the worm has turned, just when or why we can't remember. We have a notion it was about the time we learned that our idol was a vegetarian. There seemed to be something spurious about such mighty swashbuckling on carrots and spinach.

Pasteurizing Poetry

Poetry just now is at a low ebb both in England and America. "Let us honestly admit the truth," says Mr. Trevelyan, speaking for Great Britain, "that poetry has ceased to be a great popular and social art. It is no longer possible for it to be publicly recited or performed in any way." Here in America the situation appears at first glance less desperate. In Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay and Alfred Kreymborg we have troubadours who can draw audiences to hear poetry chanted. But for one person who comes out to hear the lays of our last minstrels, one hun-

dred gather round the electric piano of Mr. Guest. Mechanical music satisfies the larger audience, and only a few now aging voices are catering to the small one. This decline of poetry seems to us an inevitable result of the age of science. Our so-called poetic renaissance carried with it the seeds of its own destruction. It was a determined effort to apply the spirit of science to poetry. New forms, new subjects, experiment and evolution were its catch-words. The ivory tower became a laboratory from which strange stenches and explosions issued. For a time these startling manifestations arrested public attention and the "poetic renaissance" had a success of publicity. But after a brief trial of the new verse the public held its nose and stopped its ears. The poets who now hold the stage—Sandburg, Frost, Millay, Robinson, and a handful of others—represent in themes, and for the most part in form, the old tradition. The spirit of experimentation survives in the *Poetry Magazine*, which, except for Miss Monroe's lucid and cogent critical prose, becomes less and less readable. Miss Monroe's style almost atones for her subjects. But proceeding in our regular course, from the back to the front of the Poetry magazine, we find that in the effort to avoid what is colloquially known as "applesauce" we are expected to smack our lips over an astringent conserve of little green persimmons.

The problem of poetry is not a matter of putting new wine in old bottles. The question is how to replace that inebriating beverage with a rational, scientific, pasteurized nourishing beverage in sanitary sealed containers. We don't believe it can be done. Either man will be drunk on poetry or he will have none of it. And the trend of this industrial and scientific age is all against inebriety.

The Lost Art of Eating

Physiology of Taste or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy, by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin.

It may be asked what this great treatise on good eating can actually contribute to a land which, in the opinion of alarmists, is fast going to the hot dogs, where gastritis is more common than gastronomy. We should say that the principal lesson Brillat-Savarin has to teach is the importance of leisure in the preparation and appreciation of food. Haste will never make taste in eating and the tendency of present day America is to sacrifice everything for speed. Hence our hasheries, beaneries, quick lunches, quack lunches, automats and human filling stations. America has contributed many fine native dishes to gastronomy, besides being the melting pot into which the cookery of all nations has been dumped. Granted leisure to discuss and select from our wealth of raw and half-baked materials, a great American school of gastronomy should result. The effect of prohibition is another question which casts a shade of gloom on the situation. Fine drinking is the hand maiden of fine eating throughout the treatise of Brillat-Savarin. However deplorable the present state of the booze arts in America, we can only hope and wait on our home brewers, whose products, we are told, are improving and who may in time evolve something fit to go with fine food. In the meantime the manners at least of our newly wets may be improved by reading the *Physiology of Taste*, which may be summed up as the adventures of a stomach among masterpieces of the menu and the wine card.

Studio Tea

Richard Aldington scored his initial success in belles lettres by marrying "H. D.," who cuts such charming cameos in English verse, out of Euripides, the *Palatine Anthology* and other precious materials. But Mr. Aldington is an artist in his own right, working also in Greek marbles. Several years back he printed a garland of translations

from the *Palatine Anthology*. Pascal Covici then published *The Love of Myrrhine and Konallis*, a group of love poems in the manner of Halitosis of Halicarnassus, with the now fashionable Lesbian motif. The verse is perfectly contrived in the austere classic manner, full of delicate flute girls with oleander-tipped breasts flecked with Leucadian foam and what not. But like most neo-Greek stuff it leaves us cold. It took a real Greek to work in marble and make it come alive. Pygmalion did it with his Galatea, so Ovid says in his *Metamorphoses*. But Pygmalion's touch is a lost art. As for Richard Aldington, we turn to Witter Bynner's *Pins for Wings*, that pointed little "Who's Who on Parnassus," and find this pedigree:

"RICHARD ALDINGTON
an Attic vase
full of tea."

Like most studio tea, the tea is cold.

EARLY ADS OF HISTORY

(*Translated from the original Greek papyri*)

Homer's Odyssey

A Gripping Story of the Sea and the Eternal Conflict Between Man and Woman.

What the Reviewers Say—

Stentor in the *Argos Star*—"Better than his *Helen of Troy*."

Thersites in the *Tiryns Tabloid*—"Never has Homer smitten his lyre to better purpose."

Athenian Evening Sun—"Not only equals but surpasses his *Iliad*."

The Sparta Scream—"Homer proves beyond doubt that he is one of those who will count."

The Grecian New Republic—"Proves conclusively that Homer is a one-book author."

The Most Modern Roman of Them All

Recently we saw among our best sellers a very fine and subtle book, *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*, the charm of which consists in taking certain heroes and heroines out of Homer and making them as modern and much more human than the puppets of current jazz drama or magazine fiction. When we first read Mr. Erskine's *Helen*, it occurred to us that here at last was a classicist after Ovid's own heart, for this trick of sophisticating heroic fable began and almost ended with Ovid. No ancient author is closer to our age than Ovid, yet none is more neglected by his proper public. He wrote his *Art of Love* for men and women about town, yet by an ironic twist of fate he is chiefly known to girls and boys in the schoolroom. Even the *Metamorphoses*, fit as it is *virginibus puerisque* to outward appearances, abounds in sly cynicism and witty innuendo visible only to adults. Ovid should be more widely known and appreciated.

The life of Ovid has a peculiarly modern sound. Born in a wealthy bourgeois family, he was intended for the law, but the fatal gift of verse interfered from the cradle. When his father caught him writing a poem and took a stick to him he replied with a distich:

> Oh, father dear, make it no worse.
> I swear I'll never more write verse.

He completed his legal education and went into the practice of poetry. He wrote a play which enjoyed critical success, but his scandalously witty poems were far more popular. The spoiled darling of Roman society, he flourished uncensored till he became involved in a scandal touching

the notorious Julia, daughter of Augustus. Then for the first time the old emperor called for a copy of the *Art of Love* and honored it with a personal reading. Under the circumstances, he could hardly fail to find grounds for suppression. A stroke of the imperial pen banished the poet to a frontier post in what is now the Dobrudja, where he cooled his heels and his muse for the rest of his life. Two volumes of plaintive poems came out of his exile, but the wit and the fire of Ovid's earlier work were lacking. He thrived no more on exile than do our own young intellectuals who have banished themselves to Europe. After all, Edgar Guest is right; home has distinct advantages for a poet. Ovid, uprooted and expatriated, becomes in fact almost Guestian. The refrain of his *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* is a melancholy

Wherever I wander there's no place like Rome.

Ovid has been passed over by moderns in favor of such writers as Martial and Petronius because he is never impure for impurity's sake. He appeals not to smut-hunters, but to refined men and women of the world. For knowledge of the feminine heart he has few superiors. After Euripides he was the first modern psychologist, and he was without question the first writing man to grasp the possibilities of the feminine audience and address his work directly to it. In this respect he may be said to have cultivated virgin soil. Ovid had besides, as the *Metamorphoses* shows, everything that goes to make a great story teller, with a poetic gift which only his irrepressible sense of humor kept from reaching the sublime.

An Outline of Ideas

The main difference between an educated and an uneducated man is not that the former knows more facts. It is

the latter's belief that all the big ideas were born yesterday or remain to be born to-morrow. A man in this frame of mind is an easy mark for all the notion-mongers, cultists and quacks in every field of thought who come along crying their warmed-up panaceas as the last word on religion, society or politics. It is important to know that man has been a thinking animal for a long time and has thought to some purpose, that there is no such thing as "new thought" without new facts, and that new facts are scarcer than popular scientists would lead us to suppose. That is why Will Durant's *The Story of Philosophy* seems to us the most valuable of all the outlines for true education. It shows us the sources of our general ideas from Plato to platitudes and from Socrates to syndicates. It may be true as the most hard-headed of our syndicate sages has recently stated, that philosophers get nowhere and are as so many chimpanzees chasing fleas in their cages (squirrels in their wheels would seem a more just and delicate simile). But even granting that thought gets man nowhere, he craves it, and why should he not get it from the sources? Take a pinch of Plato and a quart of ink and you have the average journeyman philosopher. And Plato as digested in *The Story of Philosophy* goes down just as easily.

One might call Mr. Durant's fine achievement a history of thought for the thinking fellow. It has all the virtues of the best popular writing and none of its vices. The style is light, easy and pleasant, but always dignified. Mr. Durant neither jazzes his philosophers nor patronizes them. It was the latter attitude which marred that lively and interesting outline of bacteriology, Paul de Kruif's *Microbe Hunters*. Dr. de Kruif put his scientific forefathers through their paces like a fond parent showing off his precocious child, with a "Wasn't that cute?" and "Whatever put that into his head?" The dumbest modern in the light of his larger knowledge can patronize the shrewdest ancient, as the wise

heads of our motor-educated younger generation patronize the parents who taught them to walk. But such condescension is hardly warranted. *The Story of Philosophy* treats Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, Spinoza, Voltaire and the rest always as the masters. For all his pride of showmanship our conductor retains the humility of a disciple.

Every chapter in this book is a little biography as well as an essay on philosophy. There have been few more picturesque careers than the life of Voltaire, for instance, as here related. You can read *The Story of Philosophy* for pure story or study it for philosophy. Considered merely as a reference book this volume should be in every library. Simply for self-protection at such times as he may have to move in collegiate circles, the average man should know that the Platonic doctrine was not advice to the love-lorn and that the categorical imperatives are not to be found in Harkness' *Latin Grammar*.

Bridge Table Talk

Since Charles Lamb wrote about Mrs. Battle and Whist nothing human or humane has been addressed to card players. One reads Hoyle and Elwell and Whitehead and Work with a feeling that the fellows simply aren't human. They know their stuff like so many calculating machines and write it that way. They have card sense, but no card sympathy. The human element that makes auction bridge the fascinating game it is seems utterly unknown to them. They know the permutations and combinations of the cards, but not the complexes and neuroses of the card players. Why are the weakest players frequently the strongest bidders? Why will one player never trust his partner and another always expect miracles of him? These psychological factors are a mystery to Work and Whitehead, but not to Wynne Ferguson, author of *Practical Bridge*. Mr. Ferguson

recognizes that, in spite of book knowledge and experience, bridge players remain human beings prone to hog the bid or deny their partner. He knows every mental weakness common to bridge players and labors with the victim kindly but firmly. Take this pig-headed player who never supports his partner's bid in a minor suit: "Do you belong to some secret order," asks Mr. Ferguson, "the laws of which will not permit you to assist your partner because he has bid a minor suit? Have you promised your family that you wouldn't allow your partner to play a hand at clubs or diamonds? Are you one of these birds?" The man with a major-suit complex is going to feel pretty thoroughly ashamed of himself before Mr. Ferguson gets through with him.

"Have you ever been bitten by saps?" inquires Mr. Ferguson. "It seems to me that I am unlucky when it comes to sap bites. If there is a sap anywhere around the bridge table, I get him and his bite is deadly. The sap's daily pastime is doubling four clubs or four diamonds when there is no score; or taking you out of a double when you have the opponents lashed to the mast. His usual excuse for a take out when you have doubled is: 'Well, partner, I had no trumps' and he seems to think that's excuse enough, when, as a matter of fact, having no trumps is not a particularly unique experience."

We had ourself observed and classified some seven deadly simps among our bridge cronies and we find all these and a good many more described in this book. In fact, we found *ourself* there, handled rather kindly considering the grossness of our particular complex. *Practical Bridge* is the easiest-reading and hardest-hitting bridge book in existence. It is so human that we suspect the author, unlike those aloof perfectionists, Work and Whitehead, has bridge weaknesses of his own. He probably pounds on the table as on a

pulpit and tells his partner what he should have done to save himself and the rubber. Nevertheless, Mr. Ferguson has written the first bridge book that enabled us to combine pleasure with instruction and we hasten to recommend him to all who have writhed under the cold superiority of Hoyle and Elwell, Work and Whitehead.

What Is News?

A new definition has been formulated by Gerald White Johnson in *What Is News?* second in the Borzoi Handbooks of Journalism. "News," says Mr. Johnson, "is anything selected for treatment by a newspaper that is so treated that it interests a number of persons."

News is probably capable of as many definitions as poetry. "It's the way it's written," says the reporter, and "It's the way it's rewritten," retorts the copy desk. "All the news that's fit to print," boasts the editor, and "All the news that fits to print," says the makeup man as he surveys the holes in the page.

Mr. Johnson's definition of news is better than any previous one because it recognizes that a good newspaper man can make news out of anything he chooses. A water shortage in Evanston would be no news in Chicago, but translated into terms of thousands of commuters coming unshaved and unwashed to their work it made a fine first-page story.

"Dog Bites Man" was not news, according to Pulitzer, but when a reporter for the *Daily News* made the animal preface his attack with "three barks in rabid succession" the story was a wow. This same gifted reporter has actually made news out of a murder in Cicero, a divorce on Wilson avenue and a jewel robbery on State street.

The Play That Made the War Safe for Realists

What Price Glory heads the new collection *Three American Plays*, by Maxwell Anderson and Laurence Stallings. Back in 1924 the play started its triumphant run, but the book is only now available to readers. In the meantime it has made history. From 1918 till the time Stallings and Anderson scored their sensational hit with this great war drama there was a curse on anything connected with the war. A few war books, of which the best was Thomas Boyd's *Through the Wheat*, had been published with some critical but no popular success. Editors, publishers and producers had decided that nobody wanted to be reminded of the war. Then came *What Price Glory* and, presto! the war was safe for literature, drama and the movies.

The whole wave of war plays, films, short stories, novels, diaries and reminiscences started with the success of *What Price Glory*. This play also marked the turn from the bogus heroic of the Arthur Guy Empeys and the Private Peats to the plain-spoken realism of recent war books. John Dos Passos in *Three Soldiers* had made a move in this direction, but his soldiers were neither interesting nor typical. Stallings and Anderson created two magnificently colorful characters in *Capt. Flagg* and *Sergt. Quirt* and supplied them with plenty of colorful language. For the pure, racy American language, the lines of this play cannot be beaten. We had forgotten just how good they were. The dialogue fairly snaps and sparkles. It reads as well as it acted.

Two great films, *The Big Parade* and *What Price Glory*, grew out of this play. The latter is a picture worth going miles to see and has kept amazingly close to the letter and spirit of the book. Some people prefer picture to play, but we believe a reading of the lines will change their minds. Take the first meeting of *Flagg* and *Quirt*, when the former demands news of the girl *Quirt* stole from him in China. Question meets answer like the crack of a whip:

Flagg—What happened to her?
Quirt—What happened to the battleship Maine?

The characters of *Flagg* and *Quirt* are a little softened, their language more than a little chastened, in the film; and this could not be avoided. Common movie hokum is more evident in the sentimentalizing of *Charmaine*, who shows herself in the play as unsentimental a little minx as ever followed the army. As films go, *What Price Glory* is a masterpiece, but the necessary concessions to a wider public make it fall far short of its original.

It would be odd if the great American play were to have been laid in France, but if *What Price Glory* is not our finest native drama we have no second guess. Certainly no other characters in current plays stand out like *Flagg* and *Quirt*, and few in fiction.

Stallings and Anderson have made two ventures in American drama since *What Price Glory*. Both appear in the present volume. *The First Flight* deals with an early incident in the life of Andrew Jackson and *The Buccaneer* dramatizes that picturesque pirate, William Morgan of Panama. Jackson and Morgan were pretty good swashbucklers, but not up to *Flagg* and *Quirt*. The other two plays are thrown in for good measure. *What Price Glory* makes this book and the book belongs in every good American library.

Hark! Hark! The Borzoi Bark!

The Theater, the Drama, the Girls
By George Jean Nathan

The famous cynic bark has a persistent local echo in George Jean Nathan. Nathan is the most urban of our critics and consequently the least urbane, if urbanity means,

as we assume it does, a more mellow humor and broader horizons than anywhere appear in Mr. Nathan's astute acerbities. Nathan lives according to his lights, but they are mainly footlights, and to be at the core of Manhattan's sophistication is to be a long way from any wholesome illumination. No one can put anything over on Mr. Nathan without his being there to see that it is done properly. Not a "boob trap" can be sprung in a Broadway theater till Mr. Nathan has sagaciously sniffed the bait. He wriggles his way out of the trap after the first curtain, diminished by a segment of his evening, but with the proud consciousness, so coveted by the sophisticated, that he has not been hoaxed *in absentia.*

This book, like most of Mr. Nathan's tirades, entertained us, for Nathan calls names well, with sense as well as sound, and fun along with fury. But the Rialto patter becomes a little shrill, and the aesthetic which Mr. Nathan asks of the stage appears less and less in his own style. True, he may pause, in a rodomontade, to recall golden evenings in the theaters of Moscow, Munich, Timbuctoo, evenings far away and long ago and

Sweet as remembered cocktail after drought,

But we have heard of these same evenings many times before. They have become property evenings. Mr. Nathan needs new enthusiasms. The only distinctly new enthusiasms that we note in this volume are, item, one enthusiasm for James Branch Cabell (possibly second hand) and, item, one enthusiasm for Sidney, the brother of Charles (Chaplin), who, in a phantasy called *The Plumber*, has dug himself into our critics's affections. By all odds the tenderest note in the book is a prolonged lament for the famous beauty chorus of *Wild Rose.* That old question, "Where are the cuties of yesteryear?" moves this cynic to pickle his cynicism in briny bathos. Diogenes has his tub.

The Source Book of the Barnum Saga

There has been a Barnum book born every minute for the last three years. Only Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Paul Bunyan have received anything like so much attention from American biographers. M. R. Werner's *Barnum* was the biggest and best of the series. Besides this, R. F. Dibble has done Barnum as a "strenuous American," Gamaliel Bradford as a "damaged soul," Constance Mayfield Rourke as a "trumpeter of jubilee," and H. W. Root in *The Boy's Life of Barnum* used him to teach the young idea how to shout.

The source from which all these writers have drawn was *Struggles and Triumphs of P. T. Barnum, written by himself*, a work to the writing and rewriting of which the great showman gave his odd moments for many years. More than a million copies of his life in various versions and editions were sold or given away with circus tickets by Barnum himself, and yet the book was little known to the present-day readers before the new biographers began to mine and quarry there. Now it is again available in two editions, the first by W. R. Browne for the Viking Press and the second by George S. Bryan for Alfred Knopf.

Mr. Bryan's *Barnum* in two elephantine volumes has engrossed more of our time than we could well afford during the first by W. R. Browne for the Viking Press and the job in synthesizing the various Barnum gospels. As the prince of humbugs grew greater and greater his perspective on his early career naturally altered. The shabbier episodes shrank in later versions of the autobiography. Mr. Bryan has picked out and pieced together from all the Barnum codices and pandects a continuous narrative which slights not one of the miracles or, as some said, humbugs. It is an honest exposé, every word of it by the prince of humbugs himself. Barnum told his own story better than any of his

biographers and left them little to do in the way of iconoclasm.

What a man, what a story! Who will read the puny myths of Paul Bunyan when the gigantic truths of P. T. Barnum are available? So far as the American people are concerned this is a greater book than *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, inasmuch as it typifies the native American genius. Barnum was the Yankee Benvenuto. What the casting of a Perseus meant to an artistic people, a nation which excels in business and publicity should find in the catching of the Swedish nightingale, the conquest of Europe by Gen. Tom Thumb, the purchase and exploitation of Jumbo, and the creation of the biggest show on earth. Barnum was the first great apostle of pep and optimism in this country, the first to lecture on the art of money-getting, and father of modern publicity and advertising. The shrewdness, gusto and salty humor of Barnum's own story has been equaled only by Ben Franklin whom Barnum resembled in some ways and not at all in others. The doctrine of thrift had no appeal for Barnum. His idea might be summed up as "Watch the dollars, and the pennies will take care of themselves." He could lose a million without concern, confident that he knew where the mazuma grew and had only to go out and pick some more. His fortune went up and down overnight like the big tent. He was often knocked down but never counted out.

Comparing Barnum with his would-be peers to-day it seems to us that we have fallen on an age of small and mean impresarios. His aim was always to give his public the biggest and best humbugs for the smallest money. He repeatedly boasts that no customer ever complained of not getting the worth of his money, and there is apparently no reason to doubt this statement. He was continually combing the world for the smallest dwarfs, the biggest giants, the most ponderous pachyderms, the most amazing monstrosities

and the most moral and instructive dramas that money could buy. His generous tradition persists in the modern circus, but certainly not on stage or in the prize ring. The amusement seeking public is now hoaxed with petty humbugs at the highest prices the traffic will bear.

Not the least interesting part of Barnum's autobiography is the story of his boyhood among the Connecticut Yankees. We learn from these pages that Barnum's love of a sharp trade or a practical joke was a Yankee inheritance, although he carried both to more profitable lengths than any Yankee before him had ever dreamed of. But he loved the game more than the dollars, and that, we believe, is still a characteristic of native American business men.

The Professor and Modern Literature

It may or may not be of importance what the professor thinks of modern literature. But what modern literature thinks of the professor is certainly of serious import since it may determine the attitude of many thousands of people toward scholarship and teaching.

Up to some ten or fifteen years ago the popular idea of the professor was amiable though inaccurate. I refer to the concept of the absent-minded professor. The typical professor was thought to be a moony and mild-mannered fanatic full of miscellaneous information and harmless eccentricities, who nibbled Latin roots and carried fossils in his pockets. But in spite of his practical inefficiency he was regarded with affection and respect not only for his long white beard but because he had character and molded his students. Moreover it was conceded that he had a mind, although it was generally absent.

This benevolent concept of the absent-minded professor has recently faded out of contemporary literature, except for the more backward of our funny papers and one or two

conservative humorists such as Mr. Harry Leon Wilson. The absent-minded professor has disappeared from the public mind and as nature abhors a vacuum something more vicious has come in his stead. The new notion of the professor, begotten and nurtured largely by Mr. H. L. Mencken, is of a pedagogue, a dunderhead, a man who knows not Dreiser or Cabell or Frank Harris or Casanova de Seingalt. He is also, when he reaches the rank of dean or president, a slick fellow, a cheap jack, a zany, a go-getter and a Rotarian.

Unfair as I believe this diagnosis of the professor to be, it has proved widely influential and is receiving support from the most unlooked for quarters. As priests and free-masons sometimes go out into the world and write pamphlets exposing Catholicism and free-masonary, so professors are entering contemporary literature only to denounce professional scholarship. Prof. Stuart P. Sherman called on the lotus eaters to escape from the universities before they have closed the fatal eighth lustrum. Prof. Meiklejohn sees only third-rate minds in the profession. Prof. Robert Herrick gives a drab and bitter picture of his colleagues. There is also Prof. Scott Nearing.

So far I have referred mostly to critical exposés of the professor but these have their reflection in current fiction. Two recent novels had professorial heroes. The first *Professor*, by Stanley Johnson, had for its central figure the young head of an English department in a small university. Though outwardly a good fellow and popular with his students this professor is the conventional whited sepulchre, full of vanity, emptiness and sex repressions. He froths at the mouth when he finds a copy of a certain pernicious modern magazine called the *American Quicksilver* on the table in the ante-room of his physician. He blocks the promotion of his underpaid instructor because the latter reads the *Dial* and writes free verse for the college magazine. The

reader who like myself might excuse such literary conservatism is estranged by the stilted and the inefficient way in which this professor makes love to his coeds.

A novel which, like the above, was written palpably under the influence of the bitter man of Baltimore and is a mere clothes horse for his misanthropic propaganda is less damaging than a work of art like *The Professor's House* by Willa Sibert Cather. Miss Cather, an original creative artist, has no obvious bias or influences. Her *Professor St. Peter* is outwardly an admirable man, a productive scholar and also a devoted teacher and character builder who molds and is molded by his students. There is no skeleton in his closet save his wife's dressmaker's dress model which has always stood in a closet off his study and by continual propinquity has become essential to his happiness. Right here is the catch. *Prof. St. Peter* is a creature of habit and routine. So long as he is moving in the rut of productive scholarship he is self-sufficient. But once he has given birth to his magnum opus, a history of Spanish America, he finds in himself an aching void which nothing can fill. The productive scholar as Miss Cather shows him is like certain insects which must produce once and die. That Miss Cather did not finish *Prof. St Peter* off was an artistic mistake for which critics have not failed to rebuke her. For once she seems to have deferred, in a grudging half-way manner, to the popular demand for what is called a happy ending.

So much for the bleak impression of the professor which prevails rather generally in contemporary literature. To correct it, I believe that it is only necessary for the professor and contemporary literature to meet oftener and get better acquainted with one another, but I recognize that there are certain obstacles in the way, the first and most serious of which is the exacting training for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The career of a Ph.D. is not unlike the career of a Roman vestal virgin as a high school lad summed it up

on his examination paper for a school teacher friend of ours. "They spend ten years learning how to be virgins, and ten years practicing it, and ten years teaching others how to be virgins." The ritual and precedents of literature as taught in our graduate schools allow little time for secular entertainments. There is even a feeling that a Ph.D. may be contaminated by viewing the current scene. Lanciani writes that the vestal virgins were not allowed to attend the athletic games "for fear the sight of those admirable plastic figures might disturb the serenity of their contemplations." It is not without a certain risk that a Ph.D. looks at literature in its nude and plastic stage to-day. Better for him to confine himself to the venerable bronzes properly labeled in the hall of fame. This conception of the professor is in a certain degree appealing. I believe that the sure fire of learning will be kept burning, if anywhere, in our colleges. I think that the teachers of literature should probably refrain from other than critical writing for even the slightest creative urge is disturbing to a teacher. But although a Ph.D. need not be creative, I do not think he should be unsophisticated. The vestals of literature should to my mind be "wise" virgins or demi-virgins, alive to what is going on in contemporary literature if only to understand and impress their students.

A word as to what contemporary literature can do for the professor and vice versa. Although he finds himself despised and condemned so long as he remains aloof he will be welcomed like the prodigal son so soon as he returns critic or reviewer. The literary supplements and even the *American Mercury* are full of repentant professors. Our publishers eagerly welcome scholarly testimonials, and such men as Prof. William Lyon Phelps can hardly keep up with the demand for their genial appreciations. Of more serious value perhaps to a teacher of literature is the practice he gets in forming independent opinions. The doctoral

training in literature deals with fixed reputations and emphasizes what is called "the literature of the subject." When he turns to contemporary literature the professor must deal with sources without secondary literature to lean on. His opinion of Whitman or Poe can be second hand and supported by centipedal footnotes citing respectable authorities. On Sinclair Lewis or Carl Sandburg he must make up his own mind and set up an opinion unbolstered by this formidable underpinning.

The professor, in turn, offers much of value to contemporary criticism. He can preserve a wholesome scepticism and resist the current plague of superlatives. He can keep an open mind that does not swing wide open like a barn door to every hack that is touted in the book pages. He can slip in references to books that are more than a year old, furtively reminding the public that there are whole libraries of good books that are no longer advertised. In this connection one column like Bert Leston Taylor's *Line o' Type* did more for real literature than all the book pages together. Furthermore, a little scholarly thoroughness is not by any means a bad thing for current criticism. Prof. Sherman's newspaper readers like to feel that he will not review the last book of the latest popular novelist without first mastering the whole literature of the subject. When Prof. Sherman asserts that Mr. Floyd Dell's latest book is based on the babes in the wood myth he will prove it by tracking the babes in the wood through the whole Dell cycle from the book under consideration to Mr. Dell's first literary misdemeanor.

We may knock and disown our degrees if we will.
But the stamp of the Ph.D sticks to us still.

One sees many hopeful signs that the gap between the professor and contemporary literature is about to be bridged successfully. Professors in increasing numbers are stepping

over into literature or journalism, and literary men like Robert Frost are teaching in universities. One of the best selling novels of recent years is by Prof. John Erskine of Columbia University, and I do not think that any reader of *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* will say that the author lacks understanding of men and women as they are to-day.

Martial: A Roman Journalist

Facile and journalistic are two of the most contemptuous epithets in the entire critical kit. They carry some sting for any writer who employs a light touch to report the passing show, but the effect need not be utterly devastating. Consider the Roman wise-cracker and light versifier Marcus Valerius Martialis. Martial was nothing if not facile and he was a journalist in the worst as well as the best senses of the word. Yet he has survived every serious poet of his day.

The lot of a born journalist some sixteen hundred years before newspapers was not a happy one. Martial came to Rome from the provinces under Nero. His birthplace was Bilbilis, a little town in Spain whose name rang as quaintly on urban ears as Keokuk or Kokomo to-day. The bright young man from Bilbilis found a few wealthy Spaniards who would dole out dinners and denari to needy countrymen who could tell an amusing story, but no steady patron to endow him as Horace was endowed by Maecenas or Vergil by Pollio. The public was his regular meal-ticket and he was the first Roman writer to depend largely on the actual sales of his work. He had his public to please and no scruples about doing so.

Martial lived by his wits for some years before his wit became the sensation of Rome. He was in his early twenties when he came to the capital and close to forty before he

emerged as a literary figure under Titus and Domitian. During these days he learned his Rome, high and low, front door and back door, slum and palace. There is no locality, no phase of life or type of character in the world's capital that does not pass before the reader of Martial. His epigrams are a "Rome Day by Day" spiced with wit, satire, cynicism, and a generous helping of scandal.

Police reporting began and ended, for the long interval known as the dark ages, with Martial. The comic and tragic accidents of city life which make odd news stories to-day inspired timely epigrams for Martial. A boy was killed by a falling icicle as he looked up at the aqueduct which fed the baths of Agrippa. Martial reports the tragic oddity, tacking on a Brisbanian moral:

What may not happen when cruel Fortune wills?
Where are we safe when aqua pura kills?

Regulus, the prominent shyster lawyer, was driving out to his country place. As his car passed under a jerry-built portico, the masonry came crashing down, missing him by a hair. Martial uses this near-catastrophe to prove that lawyers bear a charmed life, which nobody will deny. Modern headlines leap out at you from accidents like these. Others of the epigrams would be humorous news stories to-day. Martial covered the courts and auction rooms and rewrote the snappy comebacks of lawyers and auctioneers.

We have already called Martial a journalist in the worst as well as the best senses of the word. He was the first press agent and professional panegyrist with a long list of fairly profitable accounts. The rewards of panegryric then of course were pathetic compared with the pickings in these enlightened days. When Martial needed a new toga, he turned a graceful compliment to some wealthy friend. Sometimes he got the toga, sometimes not. If not he wrote an-

other and more fulsome epigram. A presentable toga was essential for dining out with possible patrons, a duty which the needy poet confessed but deplored as follows:

How can I stand it? How can people wish
My output cramped so, just for soup and fish?
Gosh! It's a month now since I wrote a line—
That comes of asking poets out to dine!

Some of Martial's press-agenting was on a larger and more profitable scale. A well deserved tribute to that artistic and philanthropic millionaire, the younger Pliny, earned the poet traveling money back to Bilbilis. A whole book of epigrams, the *Liber Spectaculorum*, consists of publicity for the imperial circuses. We read here of Caesar's unparalleled generosity in providing these magnificent spectacles, of Caesar's unerring decisions in favor of the popular gladiator, of the discriminating elephant that picked Caesar out of a crowd that packed the Colosseum and bowed down before him, of the noble lion, inspired to clemency by Caesar's example, who let a rabbit run in and out of his formidable jaws, and how a cruel and ungrateful lion which turned and mangled his trainer was properly punished by Caesar to teach kindness and gratitude to the *populus Romanus* in circus assembled. These and other tributes to the Flavian emperors, as men and impresarios, got Martial, a confirmed bachelor, the legal privileges accruing to a father of three children, and the honorary title of military tribune. The poet has been criticised for his crass flatteries to the egregious Domitian but it should be remembered that Domitian was the first gentleman and magistrate of the Roman people and the office dignified the man as it does to-day.

Another duty of Martial's hard driven Pegasus was writing what corresponds to modern greeting-card verse and

advertising jingles. In two books called *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* he collects his couplets written to go with gifts sent at the Saturnalia or Roman Christmas. Among these are positively the first book blurbs in publishing history. We submit a few specimens:

VIRGIL'S GNAT

"Arms and the man" we read till dinner;
Full fed a man wants something thinner,
Light verse is then extremely pat,
So, reader, here is Virgil's "Gnat".

TITUS LIVY'S (VEST-POCKET EDITION).

This book we warrant to condense
All Titus Livy, the immense!
So small a berth perhaps may strain him,
But else no bookcase could contain him.

CALVUS' "THE USE OF COLD WATER."

This tells of springs and wells the use;
Well, let it stew in its own juice!

LUCAN'S "PHARSALIA"

Some say that I no poet be,
My sales speak loud enough for me.

The best selling argument which Martial applies to his friend Lucan he constantly applies to his own work. He helped out his own publisher and bookseller by writing his own "jacket blurbs" and circular advertising. The appended poem was written to introduce a vest-pocket or "sheepskin" edition of the epigrams:

Brother, you like to have my wheezes ready
Upon the road and travel with 'em steady?
Buy these in parchment, book is a misnomer;
I fit your fist, so keep your case for Homer.
Lest you, not wise to where I'm sold, should chase
All over Rome, I'm tipping off the place.
Try Second's book store in the Temple block;
He never fails to keep my stuff in stock.

To balance Martial's commercial activities we may mention that he anticipated and opposed the halitosis motif in modern advertising. An epigram addressed to a man who took patent medicine to cover bad breath assures him that the remedy is more flagrant than the disease.

Like modern columnists Martial has much to say against prudes and censors whom he urges to "stay out of my little theater unless you come to see the show". His attitude toward such "stern Catos" is more apologetic, however, than that of the modern journalist, and with good reason. No tabloid goes so far in meeting the popular taste for pornography as Martial did, and in contradiction to the modern belief that the lid was off among the dear old pagans, he was often and severely criticised for immoral verse. In reply he rather weakly pleads that although his muse is naughty his life is beyond reproach, and that his writings are not intended *virginibus puerisque*. Considering that Martial's epigrams were on the atrium table in every fashionable Roman home, it is to be feared that they often reached a public for whom they were not intended. At their worst the epigrams hardly exceed the license allowed in mixed company to-day but that perhaps is little to their credit. In late Roman times a polite edition of Martial *in usum elegantiorum* was made. Of this Prof. Lindsay says "It replaces by suitable euphemisms some of the grosser words in Martial's vocabulary, words more fit for the *graffiti* of

Pompeii than for a Roman gentleman's library. "The contacts between Pompeian wallscribblings and Martial's epigrams show that he unflinchingly carried out his theory of writing the living Latin language for the man on the Appian way.

The tradition of ancient epigram sufficiently excused the license Martial allowed himself, but he would not have flaunted our taboos or decried popular standards. It is amusing to speculate how the worthies of antiquity would behave to-day. Would Plato be doing "ghost writing" for some modern illiterate as he did for Socrates, or would Socrates himself be adapting his famous question method to an *Ask Me Another* book or syndicating his popular philosophies? We doubt it. But we feel certain that Martial would be conducting a polite if racy column of pithy verse and prose. His fertile wit, his pleasing but shallow sentiment, his infinite facility in verse, his knowledge of the five and twenty standard jokes with all their variations, point to this conclusion. His love of city life, his sense of news values, his eager ear for the talk of the town, point the same way. Martial is perhaps the most modern of the ancients and his genius has always seemed to me essentially journalistic.

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